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KID IN A CANDY STORE

TERRY PENDLETON INDULGES HIS MOTORCYCLE PASSION

ChopTalk

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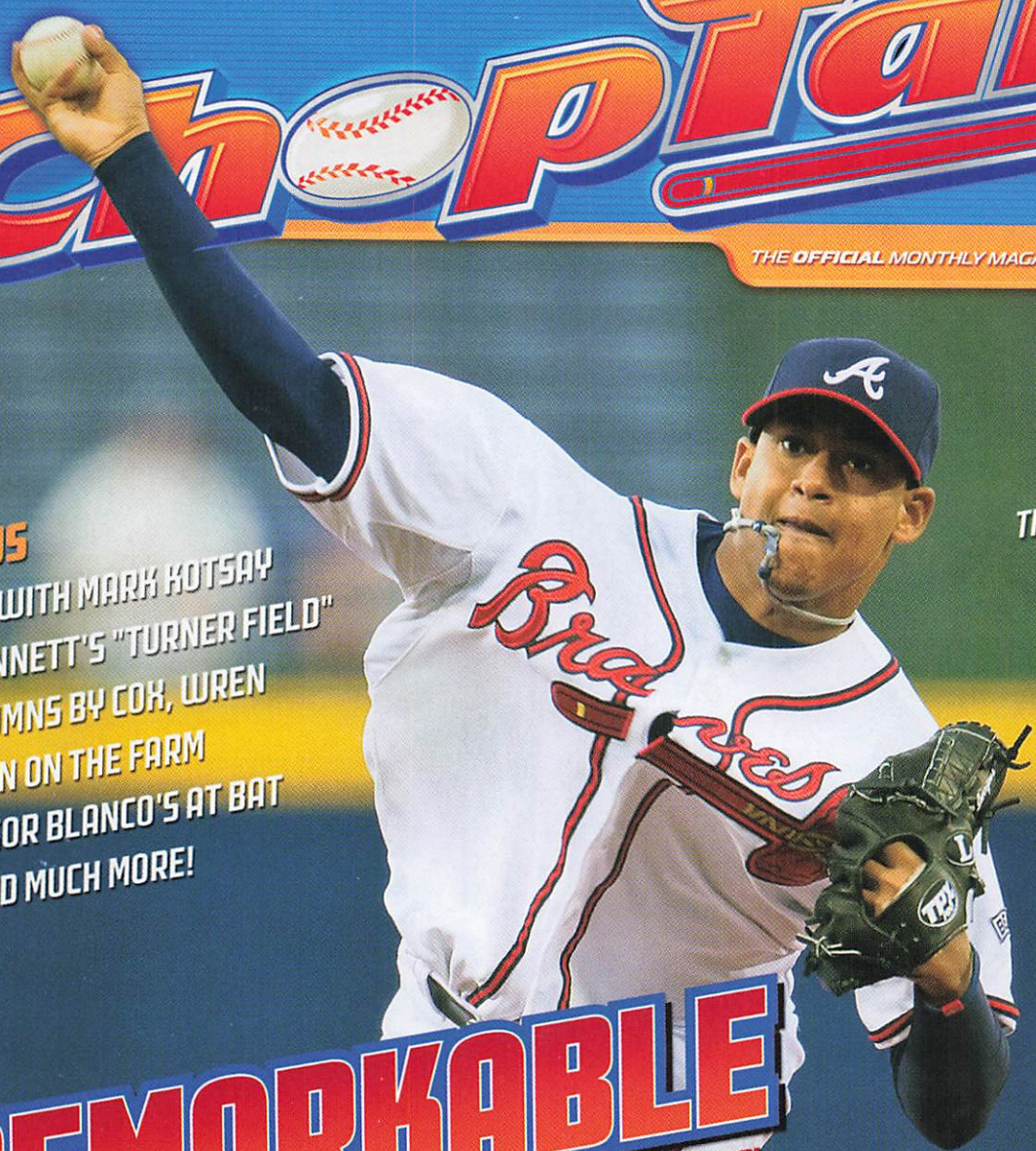

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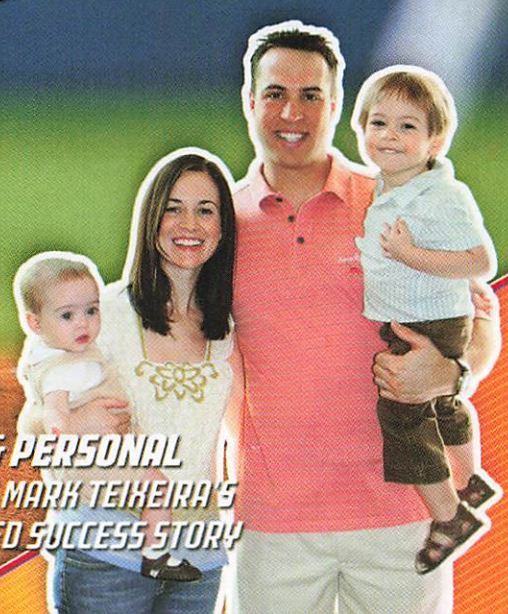

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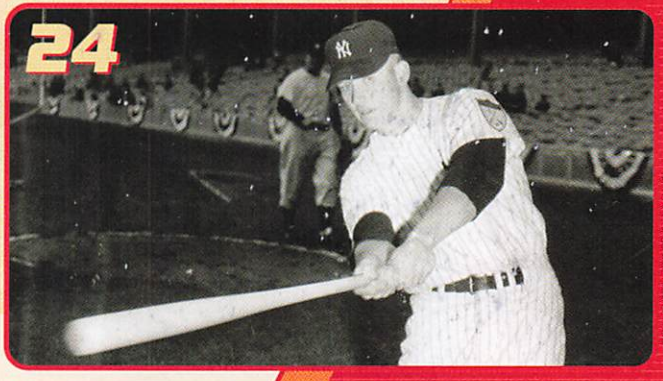

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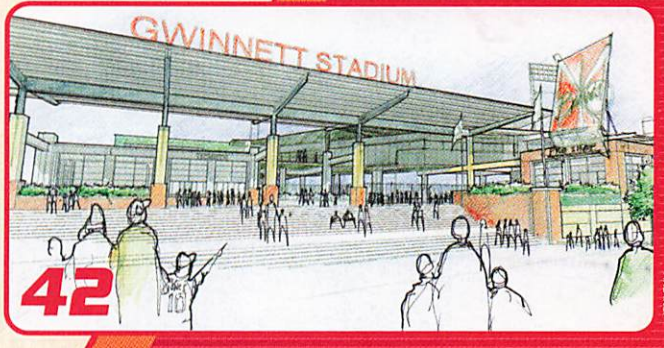

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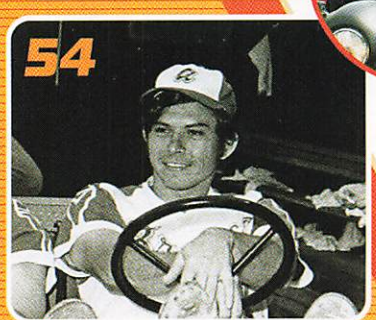

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CHOPTALK USPS Periodicals Publication 022-732; ISSN 1555-1547 is published monthly for $37.95 per year ($56.95 Canada and Mexico; $76.95 other international; payment in U.S. dollars only) by Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

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Office of publication is located at 12829 Trinity Dr., Stafford, Tex. 77477-4214. Visit Braves.com/ChopTalk. E-mail Letters@ChopTalkonline.com. This is the Official Monthly Magazine of the Atlanta Braves. Single copy price is $4.99. Periodical postage paid at Stafford, Tex., and additional mailing offices.

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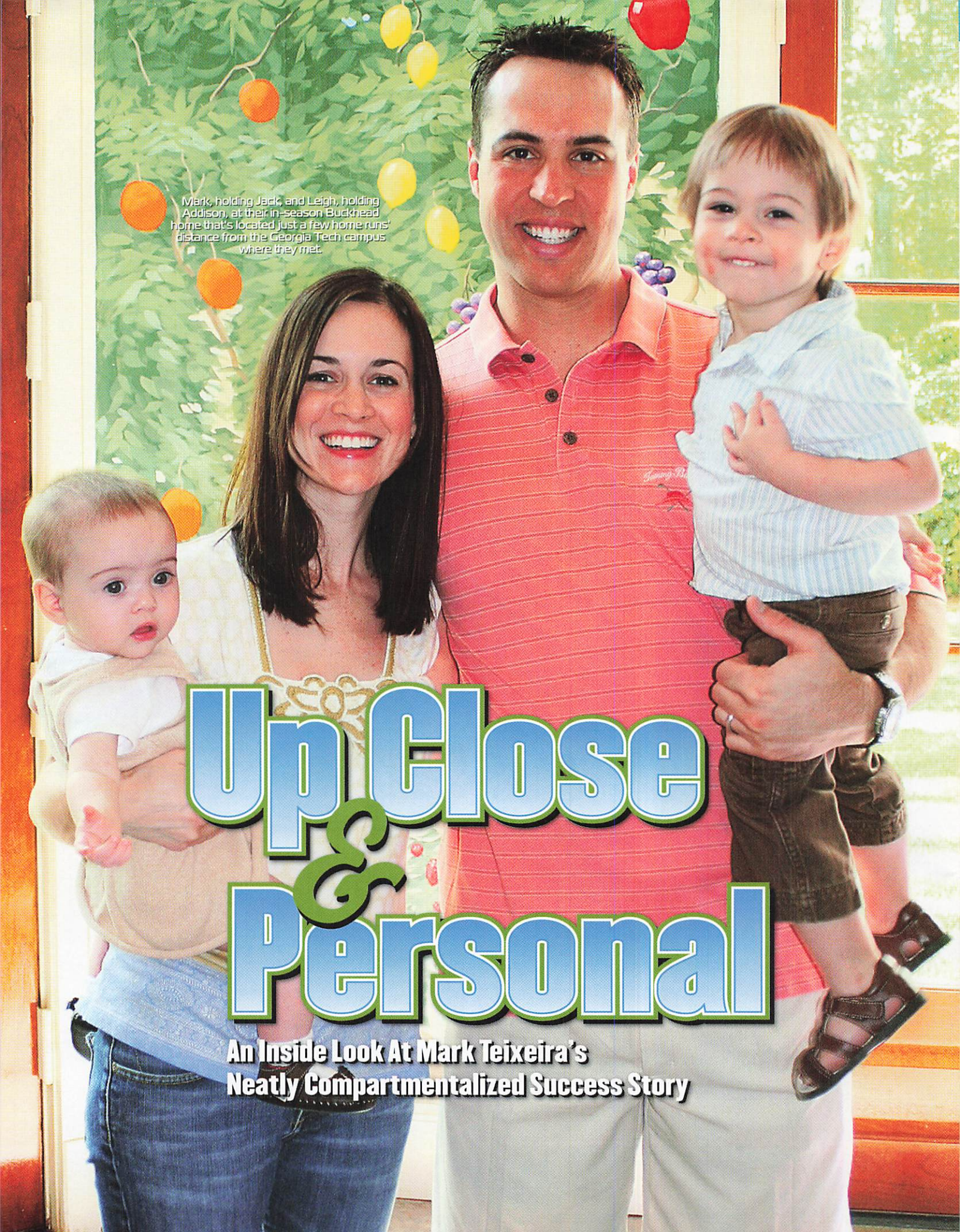


Mark, holding Jack, and Leigh, holding Addison, at their in-season Buckhead home that's located just a few home runs' distance from the Georgia Tech campus where they met.

Up Close & Personal

An Inside Look At Mark Teixeira's Neatly Compartmentalized Success Story

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

The same Mark Teixeira fans see playing first base for the Braves is virtually the same guy off the field. His approach to both baseball and life away from the game is disciplined, organized and professional.

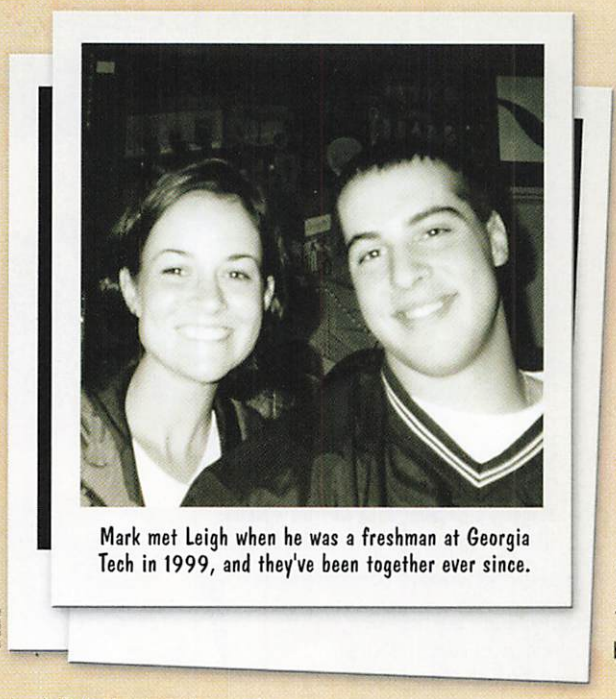
"I really separate my baseball life and my personal life," said the 28-year-old Teixeira. "When I'm home with my family and friends, baseball doesn't even enter my mind. When I get to the field, it's business. I have fun, but at the same time, this is a business and that's why I prepare the way I prepare and study the game."

Teixeira likes routines. He gets up every morning in time to have a late breakfast with his wife, Leigh, and to have plenty of time to play with 2-year-old son, Jack, and 8-month-old daughter, Addison, before leaving for the ballpark by 2 o'clock. Once there, he completes a stretching and warmup regimen, something he's done on his own for years. His coming-to-the-plate song is "All Along the Watchtower," by Jimi Hendrix, the same since he was in college at Georgia Tech, where he was national college player of the year in 2000.

He's meticulously neat, but despite being with the Braves since the July 2007 trade deadline (acquired from Texas last July 31 with lefty Ron Mahay for catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia and four prospects), he still hasn't figured out how to organize his locker at the Turner Field clubhouse.

"In Texas, we had drawers, lots of different drawers, we had shelves," he said, gesturing around the locker. "This one has a storage space that's too high, and these hooks everywhere."

He stopped, chuckled and said, "A lot of people compared me to Jerry Seinfeld," referring to the comedian who played himself as a neatnik on his ultra-popular sitcom.



SPECIAL

Mark met Leigh when he was a freshman at Georgia Tech in 1999, and they've been together ever since.

However he gets things accomplished, Teixeira has the professional success to back up his idiosyncrasies.

In August 2007, his first full month in the National League, he was named Player of the Month for hitting .315 with 10 home runs and 32 RBIs. He was one of just eight players last year to have a .300 average (.306) with 30 home runs and 100 RBIs (105), and he did it in the fewest at-bats (494) and games (132). He's won both Gold Gloves (2005, 2006) and Silver Sluggers (2004, 2005) and was an All-Star in 2005 when he set an all-time major league record for RBIs by a switch-hitter (144).

The accolades are nice, but Teixeira isn't one to read or believe his own clippings. "Someone told me early on that when you're going good, you're not as good as you think, and when you're going bad, you're not as bad as you think," he said. "It was a good lesson. I don't buy into the hype. You are what you are over 162 games. I've gotten better at (believing) that over the past couple of years when I've had slow starts or was on a team that wasn't winning."

CARLOS RESTREPO

Instead Teixeira neatly compartmentalizes his life. There is baseball, the game and the required off-the-field appearances. And there is home.

"I think sometimes the two worlds can get meshed too much," Teixeira said. "I have a beautiful family that I love and can't wait to get home from the field to see."

Teixeira met Leigh at the end of his freshman year at Georgia Tech.

"His roommate introduced us at a party, and we talked all night," said Leigh. "We went on one date after that, then he left to play in the Cape Cod League (summer college league where he was named the top pro prospect)."

When Teixeira returned that fall, they dated exclusively, remaining sweethearts throughout college.

"It's wonderful because that was such a great time for us, and we have all these shared memories," said Leigh.

The two married in December 2000, and the next year, Teixeira was drafted by the Texas Rangers in the first round (fifth pick overall). Teixeira left Georgia Tech, but Leigh graduated in 2002 with a degree in industrial design. She worked in product design for Pier One Imports, including designing products that made it to the market. The couple made their first home together in Westlake, Texas, where they still maintain their residence. They also have a home in Arizona.

A little over two years ago, the Teixeiras welcomed their first child, Jack, who's now an energetic toddler. Leigh knew a child would mean disruptions in their organized household.

"I wondered what Mark might do when peanut butter and jelly was smeared on the couch," said Leigh. "But he definitely loosened up once he became a daddy!"

Teixeira is a hands-on dad.

"He'll do it all, feeding, diapering," she said. "We trade off a lot during the off-season." That was especially true this past off-season when Addison joined the family, just two weeks after the end of the season. With Jack and a new baby, the family remained in either Texas or Arizona in the off-season and let their families, hers located in Georgia and his in Maryland, come to them for the holidays.

During the season, the focus is on extending family time as much as possible. To that end, the Teixeiras relied on their local knowledge from living in Atlanta during their college years when it came to finding an in-season home. They rented a house in the Buckhead section of Atlanta, just 15 minutes from the ballpark.

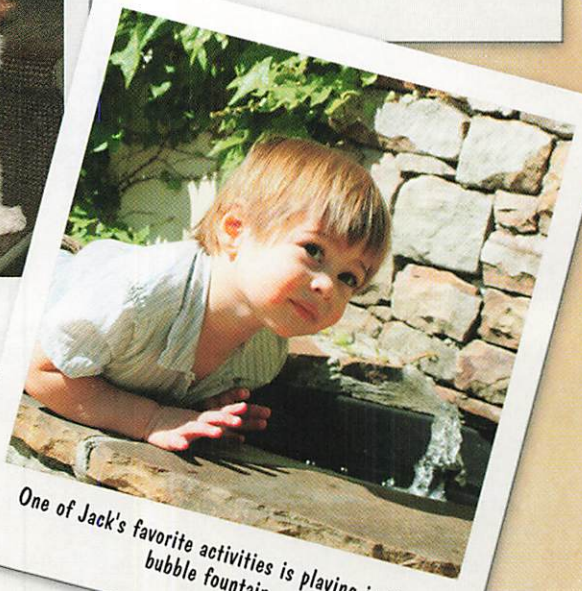
"It was a perfect situation," said Leigh. "The family that lived here wanted to rent the house and furnishings. They even had children, so they left toys here. It's great, because there's nothing in it or about it that's too 'precious.'"

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Jack shows Addison the proper way to play at the sand table.

PHOTOS: CARLOS RESTREPO

Maggie, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, likes to romp in the grass with Jack.



One of Jack's favorite activities is playing in this bubble fountain.

Tucked away on a quiet street, the Mediterranean style house has everything the Teixeiras could possibly require.

There are four bedrooms and baths, a gourmet kitchen, a quaint breakfast nook, formal living and dining rooms and sunroom. The basement includes a guest room and bath, a large family room, and a sun-filled playroom with hand-painted murals depicting Noah's Ark, flowers, fruit trees, numbers and the alphabet. Arched French doors lead out of the playroom to a modest sized grassy area where Jack can play at his sand table or run around with their dog, Maggie, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel.

The Teixeiras home has a pergola [arbor] covered with vines to the side of the house and a playhouse under the trees where Jack explores. His favorite spot, though, is a small bubble fountain built into a stone wall.

"He loves to pick up pebbles and drop them in," said Leigh.

Teixeira spends most of his highly-prized, pre-game mornings playing with Jack.

"I see so much of myself in him," he said. "There's the physical resemblance, but he always wants to be outside, and I was just like that at his age. I loved being outside. Jack loves climbing on things. He has no fear. I was probably a little more reserved at a young age."

Teixeira might have been reserved, but his discipline and competitive nature were readily apparent, some of which filtered through his father, John, a U.S. Naval Academy grad and former Navy pilot.

"I knew what was expected of me, and if I went off line, he'd get me back on line," said Teixeira. "He wasn't a harsh disciplinarian, though. I always knew what was right and wrong. I never had to figure that out for myself."

The family lived in Severna Park, Maryland, a suburb of Baltimore. John retired from the Navy and worked for a large defense contractor. His mom, Margy, was a teacher.

"My mom worked when I was a kid, but when I got older, she stopped working and spent her time driving my sister, Elizabeth, and me all over the place - soccer practices and stuff like that," said Teixeira.

He was so determined about competing that when he was five or six years old, he tried hitting left-handed when his dad told him that hitting right-handed wasn't a challenge anymore.

"He was right," said Teixeira. "From then on, I always messed around with switch-hitting."

But he did more than mess around with it. At age 13, as he was preparing to enter high school, he spent the entire summer batting exclusively left-handed, at the urging of his father.

"I agreed with him," said Teixeira. "It was my decision. It was tough at first, but two years into it, I really got it. I knew I had to discipline myself to get better, and it was going to help me out in the long run. Switch-hitting was the best thing I ever did. I really thank my father for that."

Becoming a successful switch-hitter in high school (Maryland player of the year in 1997 and '98, as well as a high school all-American in '98) increased major league interest in him, which is when Teixeira learned another valuable lesson: Baseball is a business. Prior to the 1998 draft, the Boston Red Sox offered him a $1.5 million, take-it-or-leave-it bonus that he declined because he wanted to hear other offers. Then, rumors swirled about his "signability," and interest dried up.

"It was a huge disappointment to learn that baseball didn't operate the way I imagined," said Teixeira. "I was naïve and thought everyone would be honest."

He said the 1998 draft experience was a blessing in disguise, because it turned out he really wanted to go to college.

"Pro baseball hates me talking about it, but I'm a huge proponent of going to college," he said. "My life would not have been the same (if I hadn't gone). I still would have been a big leaguer, but I wouldn't have met my wife, wouldn't have had the relationships I formed while I was in college, and I wouldn't have grown up, as I did. I'm not saying it's for everybody, but I'm always going to advise going to college."

He also developed a matter-of-fact, thick-skinned approach to baseball.

"I believe that what happened with Boston is just a microcosm of what goes on in the entire game," he said. "People ask why I hired Scott Boras to be my agent. There's answer number 1. (Organizations) are going to use everything they can against the players, and I'm going to use everything I can against the team, because it is a business. And anyone who doesn't think so is kidding themselves.

"People have actually talked to me about writing a book about my decision to choose college," he said. "I love talking to high school kids about going to college, because it was the three best years of my life. I love playing in the big leagues. I've had some All-Star Games, some Gold Gloves and Silver Sluggers, but nothing compares to life in college.

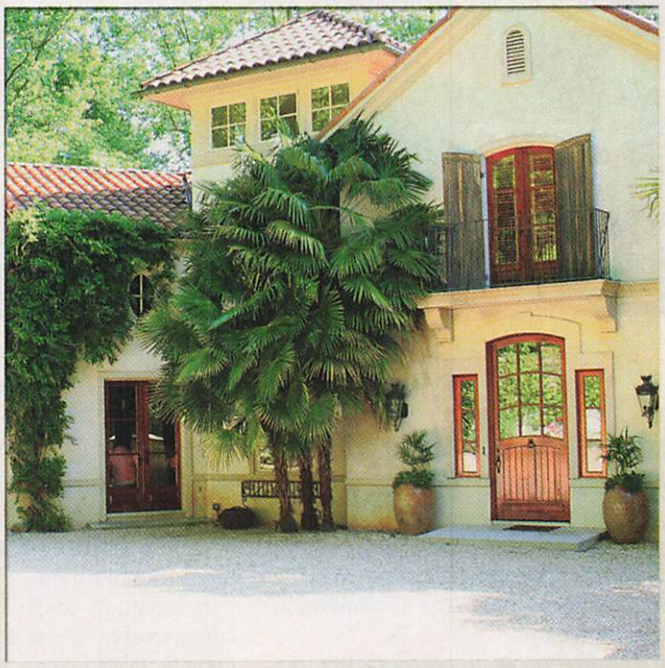
"Also, chances are you're not going to make it to the big leagues, and to have a degree will take you a lot further than maybe one or two years of minor league baseball."

The business of baseball can be a grind, but Teixeira isn't complaining.

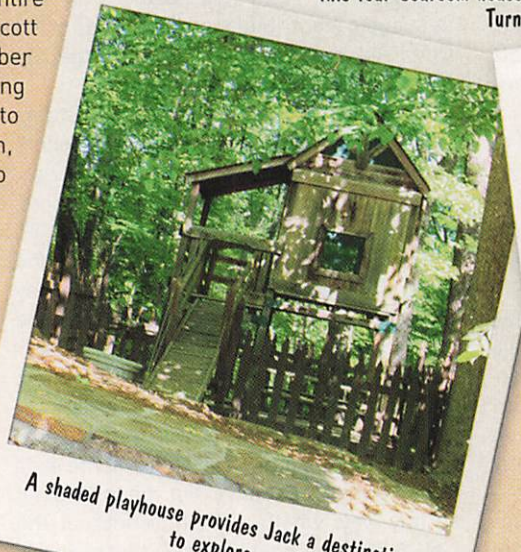
"It's a long day, but once we get between the lines, I still really love playing the game," he said. "The prep is tough. There's a lot of hard work and sweat, but getting out there and performing in front of 40,000 people... there's not much better than that."

Leigh said one of the best things about her husband is his ability to maintain perspective.

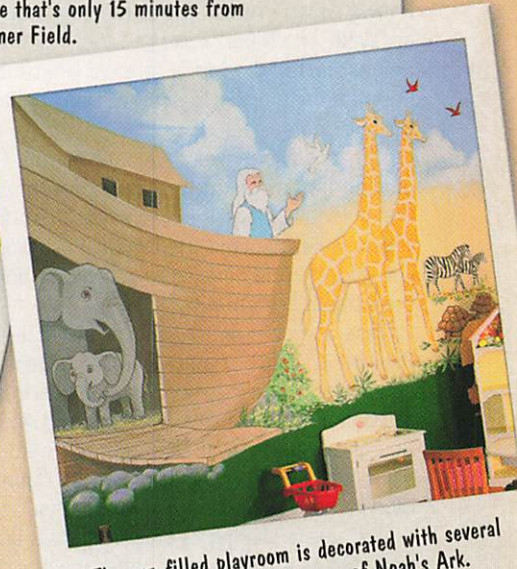
"He's good at shaking things off," she said. "He's the same person whether he strikes out three times or hits three home runs. He wants to be the best at what he does, whether it's baseball or his family. He wouldn't do it any other way."



The Teixeiras have homes in Texas and Arizona and rent this four-bedroom house that's only 15 minutes from Turner Field.

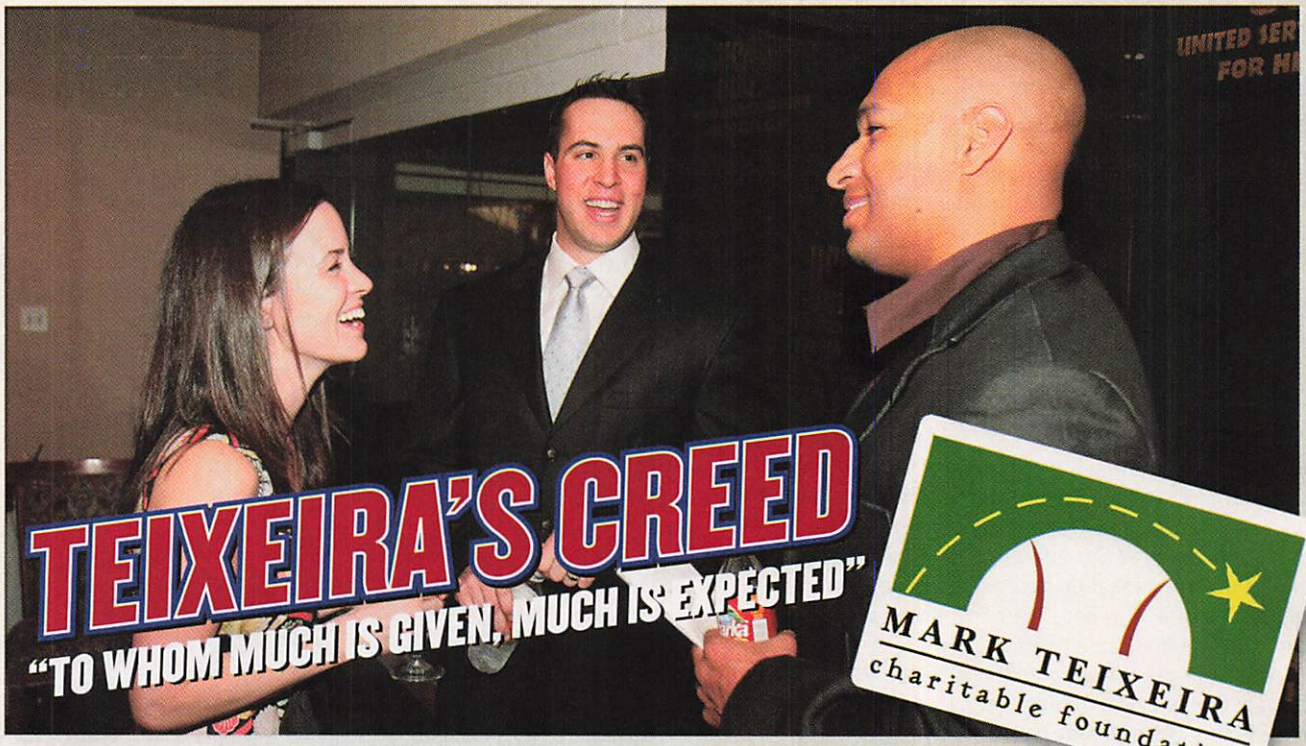


A shaded playhouse provides Jack a destination to explore.



The sun-filled playroom is decorated with several murals, including this one of Noah's Ark.

PHOTOS: CARLOS RESTREPO



SPECIAL

Mark and Leigh Teixeira visit with Toronto Blue Jays' outfielder Vernon Wells at their Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament that helps fund college scholarships.

MARK TEIXEIRA is known as an impact player. Like Chipper Jones or Alex Rodriquez, Teixeira is a player whose presence in the lineup changes how the competition approaches a game.

But Teixeira wants to be more than an impact guy on the field. He wants to be known as an impact guy in his community, as well. In 2006, Teixeira and his wife, Leigh, started the Mark Teixeira Charitable Foundation in order to achieve their philanthropic goals.

"I'm a big believer in whatever city I'm playing in, I'm going to support (organizations) in the city," said Teixeira. "For five years, we supported the Dallas-Fort Worth community, and now we're going to support the Atlanta community."

Case in point: At the end of last season, Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) Georgia approached Teixeira to see if he would be interested in hosting the 2008 Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Celebrity Golf Classic to be held on Monday, June 30 at White Columns Country Club in the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta.

"I'm always looking for organizations to support, and as a father, what better thing would there be to put my name to?" he said. "I talked it over with Leigh, and she supported it."

Teixeira taped public service announcements for the event and enthusiastically recruited his teammates' support.

A good list of celebrity golf talent is lined up for the tournament (11 a.m. warmup, 1 p.m. shotgun start and 6 p.m. dinner, awards ceremony and silent auction). Visit preventchildabusega.org for information. Non-golfers can still support the effort to prevent child abuse and neglect with tax-deductible contributions sent to: Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, 1720 Peachtree St., NW, Ste. 600, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

In addition to many of Teixeira's Braves teammates, other scheduled participants include PGA golfer Matt Kuchar, Ed Rollins, lead singer of the rock band Collective Soul, and former Braves players Ron Reed (RHP, 1966-75), Pete Smith (RHP, 1987-93) and Brad Clontz (RHP, 1995-97). Hennessy Jaguar, one of the event sponsors, is offering a new Jaguar XF as the hole-in-one prize.

"I try to gear most of my charitable endeavors toward kids," said Teixeira. "I was given every opportunity to succeed athletically and academically, and some kids aren't given that chance. For me to help out in any way, whether it's little kids at the YMCA or something like PCA, that's always close to my heart."

When he played for the Texas Rangers, Teixeira's foundation raised money to fund six college scholarships in 2006, a number that was raised to 12 scholarships last year. A Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament held in November 2006 raised over $55,000 for the foundation.

This year, in addition to the PCA Golf Tournament, Teixeira serves as honorary chairman of a $10 million capital campaign for his high school alma mater, Mount St. Joseph High School, in Baltimore, Maryland, where he also established the Nick Liberatore Memorial College Grant in memory of a childhood friend that died in a car accident at age 16. Teixeira's foundation donated $5,000 as a part of the Atlanta Braves' response to Oprah's Big Give on April 18, and he participates in other charity efforts promoted by the Atlanta Braves Foundation.

Teixeira's generosity earned some much-deserved recognition in 2006, when he was named the Roberto Clemente Award Winner representing the Texas Rangers. But philanthropy isn't something that Teixeira does for the recognition. Instead, it's an outgrowth of his upbringing.

"My parents and the teachers and priests that I knew growing up told me that I had talents and gifts," he said. "They told me that to whom much is given, much is expected. And I've always taken that with me."

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

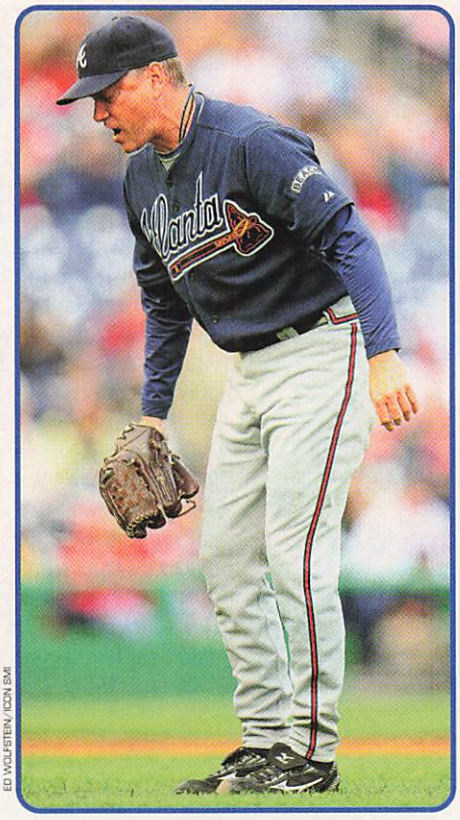
BLACK THURSDAY, HAMSTRINGS, AND SUCH

WOW... So much for setting the National League on fire, huh?

After an off-season that promised a rejuvenated pitching staff and the most powerful lineup in the league, the Braves began popping rivets at an alarming rate. And after just a few short weeks, the dugout started looking like the train station in Gone With The Wind, with injured pitchers stretching as far as the eye could see.

In the opening days of this season the Braves have had to deal with so many maladies that they need to put Hawkeye Pierce and House on the payroll. Consider some of the Braves who have suffered so far this year:

- Hamstrung Tom Glavine, who'd never gone on the disabled list before this season - an ominous sign for a team relying on a rotation that's anchored by guys closer to AARP age than to their 1995 World Championship.
- Peter Moylan, who's going to require a Da Vinci to properly recreate the intricate tattoos on his arm after getting his brand-new elbow ligament.
- Rafael Soriano. The fact that his elbow apparently doesn't need surgery and he'll only be out a couple months qualifies as good news these days
- Jo-Jo Reyes and Buddy Carlyle, whose injuries on May 8 - a.k.a. Black Thursday - marred an otherwise flawless homestand. Reyes suffered a blister and Carlyle, his replacement, got his bell rung in a collision, both departing for the trainer's room before the end of the fifth inning.
- Mike Gonzalez, who's been out so long rehabbing his elbow that he'll need to show ID to get back in the bullpen (hopefully by the time you read this).
- Mike Hampton, who's gone from punch line to outright tragic figure. (I had a whole running gag prepped for my season-preview column a couple months back where the 2008-model Hampton would keep suffering progressively greater harm but walk away without injury, building up to the point where a bus hits him and doesn't leave a scratch. Alas, Hampton got injured in spring training, and we had to scotch the whole thing.)
- And John Smoltz, whose injury scares me the most because it's got him talking in "Whatever I can do to help" terms rather than the "Heck with all of you, I'm starting again" of a couple years back.



ED WOLFSTEIN/ ICON SMI

Tom Glavine reacts to the pain of straining his hamstring in the first inning April 13 at Washington.

While his current shoulder injury is of serious concern, Smoltz is also the subject of one of the classic ridiculous baseball injury stories. Legend goes that he injured himself once by ironing a shirt - while wearing it. It's a great story, except that according to Smoltz, it isn't even close to true. The real story, he says, is he was ironing a shirt - off his body - and got sprayed with hot steam. A reporter overhearing the story completely misinterpreted it and ran it straight into urban legend.

Still, the Braves have suffered several unfortunate injuries throughout the years that are all too real:

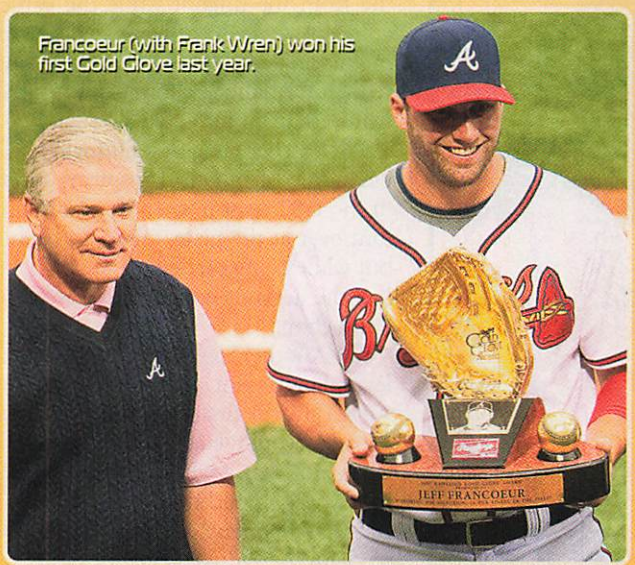
- Brian Asselstine, my own personal favorite Brave because he once talked with me from the dugout while the game was going on, was never the same after wrenching his ankle in the old chain-link outfield fence of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium while going up for a flyball.
- Catcher Greg Olson unwillingly provided one of the most inspiring moments of the 1992 season when Ken Caminiti ran him over at the plate. Olson broke his leg, but while being carried off the field, he rallied the nervous crowd with a weak tomahawk chop.
- Another catcher, Johnny Estrada, got leveled and sent to the hospital by the Angels' Darin Erstad in 2005. Fortunately, Estrada would later flourish in Arizona, and - not that anybody would suggest the injury was a good thing - his absence from the Braves' lineup allowed Brian McCann to claim the everyday catcher's role.
- David Justice's persistent knee problems in 1995 allowed Mike Devereaux to jump into the starting lineup and claim the NLCS MVP, despite playing less than 30 games for the Braves in the regular season.
- And certainly, everyone remembers Chipper's tail-over-teakettle flop last year in Pittsburgh where he landed on his wrists and ended up missing more than 20 games.

There's no point in complaining about injuries. Everybody suffers them over the course of the season. We can only hope that Atlanta got its statistically-expected rash out of the way in April - better now, of course, than in a September pennant race.

> "AFTER JUST A FEW SHORT WEEKS, THE DUGOUT STARTED LOOKING LIKE THE TRAIN STATION IN GONE WITH THE WIND."

Oh, and lest you think I'm jinxing the Braves with this column - a thought that occurred to me as I wrote it - I walked under three ladders, cracked five mirrors, and chased half a dozen black cats around the block. If there's gonna be injury, I'll take it. I can always dictate next month's column. Hey, I just felt a twinge in my shoulder…

IRON JEFF



Francoeur (with Frank Wren) won his first Gold Glove last year.

PAUL ABELL

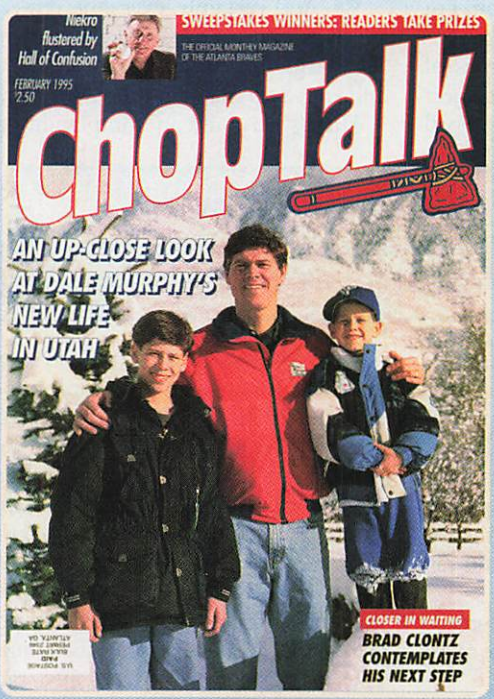
ALMOST SINCE the day the Braves first spotted Jeff Francoeur, the rather imposing label "next Dale Murphy" was hung around his neck. It's easy to see why, from his style of play to his physical appearance, even to his fan-friendliness. And at just 24 years old, Francoeur has a Murphy-like streak in the works.

When Cleveland's Grady Sizemore's consecutive games played streak ended at 382 on April 27, Francoeur assumed the major league lead. At this writing, he'd played in 365 straight games (all starts), dating to Oct. 1, 2005.

Murphy holds the Braves' record of 740 consecutive games played from Sept. 26,1981, to July 8, 1986. To put that in perspective, Francoeur wasn't quite halfway to Murphy's record - which ranks 13th in baseball history - and if he continues to play every game, he won't catch Murphy until shortly after the All-Star break in 2010.

Compiling such an ironman streak is not easy, as Murphy found out April 29, 1986, in his 676th straight game. He made a running catch at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, and the palm of his hand got caught in a seam in the fence, opening a cut that required nine stitches. With Murphy out of the lineup to start the next game, it appeared his streak would end. However, in the fifth inning, he came off the bench to hit a pinch-hit home run off the Mets' Dwight Gooden.

Of such feats, streaks are extended... and legends are born.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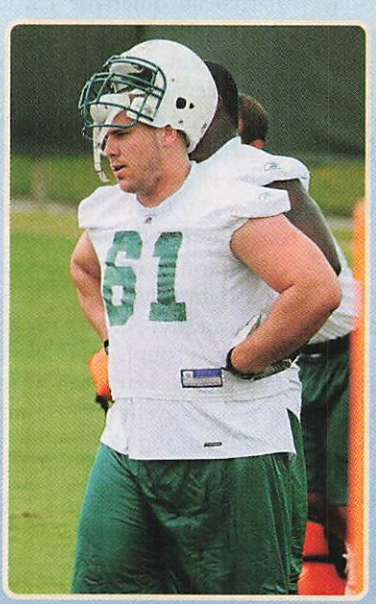
ChopTalk
AN UP-CLOSE LOOK AT DALE MURPHY'S NEW LIFE IN UTAH
CLOSER IN WAITING
BRAD CLONTZ CONTEMPLATES HIS NEXT STEP

HOW YOU'VE GROWN

IN FEBRUARY 1995, ChopTalk took readers to Utah to visit Dale Murphy at his home in Alpine. This cover showed him standing in front of snow-covered mountains with two of his eight children, sons Shawn (L) and Jacob. Shawn was 12 years old at the time, and though he was big for his age, it's not likely anyone imagined just how much he'd grow or where his size would take him.

When the NFL held its annual draft of college players April 26-27, the Miami Dolphins took Utah State offensive guard Shawn Murphy (R) - now listed at 6-3, 330 pounds - in the fourth round. Scouts describe him as "powerful, strong, quick, and intelligent," and he apparently has a chance to win a starting job with the rebuilding



MIAMI DOLPHINS

SETTING THE PACE

LEAVE IT TO ChopTalk stat guru Steve Fall to come up with this fact, which he apparently heard on ESPN: Who was the last switch-hitter to bat .400?

The obscure answer is Tuck Turner, an outfielder who hit .418 for the Phillies in 1894! However, it should be noted he played in only 82 of Philadelphia's 128 games.

It's a little early to be talking about .400, but the point is that Chipper Jones' blistering start has everyone grasping for superlatives and comparisons. So, we'll offer a few of our own.

A more realistic target for Chipper might be the Atlanta season record for batting average set by Rico Carty when he hit .366 to win the NL batting title in 1970. The franchise season record for a third baseman (.346) was set by Hall of Famer Jimmy Collins in 1897.

Chipper, of course, narrowly missed winning the batting title last year (.337), losing the crown to Colorado's Matt Holliday on the final day of the season. The Braves have had just three batting champions since moving to Atlanta in 1966. Besides Carty, there was Ralph Garr (.353) in 1974 and Terry Pendleton (.319) in 1991.

According to Elias Sports Bureau, Chipper - who was hitting .418 through the Braves' first 39 games - is just the fourth player since 1960 to have 60 or more hits (61) and 10 or more home runs (11) before his team's 40th game. The others were Billy Williams with the 1964 Cubs, Lou Brock with the 1967 Cardinals and Larry Walker with the 1997 Rockies.

What does that mean? Well, Brock wound up in the Hall of Fame - but he didn't even finish at .300 in 1967 (.299). Williams, another Hall of Famer, hit .312 in '64. Walker finished at .366 in 1997 but lost the batting title by seven points to Tony Gwynn.

The last Brave to have 60 hits and 10 home runs before the 40th game was Hank Aaron in 1959 en route to winning the batting title with a .355 average. And the last Brave to be hitting .400 through 39 games was Garr, who was at an even .400 at that point in 1971 when he batted .343, second in the league to Joe Torre.

The last time there was a player hitting .400 or better as late in the season as May 15 was in 1994 when the Yankees' Paul O'Neill and Gwynn were both over the standard last achieved in a full season by Ted Williams in 1941 (.406).

Chipper's career high for hits in a season was 189 in 2001. Only four Braves (Felipe Alou in 1966 and '68, Garr in '71, '73 and '74, Willie Montanez in '76, and Marquis Grissom in '96) have reached 200 hits in a season in Atlanta history.

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

BEAT COLD WEATHER

UPI PHOTO/GARY C. CASKEY

ESPECIALLY when they travel to Colorado or to the Northeast early or late in the season, the Braves can face rough weather conditions. But regardless of how low the temperature drops, they can't let it impact their performance. When cold weather strikes, the team prepares with different types of special gear.

Bill Acree, the Braves director of team travel and equipment manager, says the players will do whatever it takes to stay warm. While wearing heavy shirts under their uniforms would keep them warm, it also limits the flexibility needed to properly throw a baseball. So, many players wear a product called the Nike Cold Weather PRO underneath their game jersey in chilly conditions. Specially designed for baseball, this shirt is made from thermal fabrics.

"The purpose of the Nike Cold Weather PRO base layer top is to keep the structures in the throwing arm pliable and supported," said KeJuan Wilkins, media relations manager for Nike. "This is done by providing targeted warmth and stability to the high-risk areas of the arm - the elbow and shoulder - while providing breathability and moisture-wicking benefits to the rest of the body. The goal is to keep the structures in the elbow and shoulder in the best possible environment to perform at optimal levels."

Nike makes a similar product that the players can put underneath their pants.

According to Acree, some Braves also wear an extra pair of socks or use hot rubs on their shoulders, elbows and legs. They may also insert toe warmers into their socks.

Keeping the hands warm becomes especially important during cold weather, since failing to grip the ball firmly leads to errant pitches or throws. The players put hand warmer packets in their pockets for this reason.

- STEVE FALL

TRANSCONTINENTAL

PAUL ABELL

Norton's last four pinch-hit home runs have either tied the game or put his team in the lead.

THE BRAVES beefed up their bench May 5 when they acquired switch-hitting corner infielder **Greg Norton** from the Seattle Mariners in exchange for a player to be named or cash considerations.

Norton, 35, played in six games for the Mariners before being designated for assignment on April 30. He was 7-for-16 (.435) for Seattle and 9-for-22 (.409) at Triple-A Tacoma. Norton was with Tampa Bay in 2006 and '07. He has a .253 career batting average with 82 home runs and 300 RBIs in 901 games, mostly at third base (289 games) and first base (195 games).

MOYLAN'S PLIGHT

Peter Moylan's season came to a definitive end May 8 when he underwent elbow ligament transplant surgery. Dr. **James Andrews** found a bone spur lodged in the ligament, which ruled out all hope of rehabilitation without full Tommy John surgery. Pitchers normally miss a minimum of 12 months with such an operation.

Moylan led all rookies with a 1.80 and a .208 batting average allowed last season. The Australian sidearm specialist made seven appearances this year (1.59 ERA), but after recording a save April 11, experienced severe pain in the elbow. He tried to rehab it before finally opting for surgery.

TIME TO VOTE

Fan voting is underway for the starting lineups in the All-Star Game scheduled July 15 at Yankee Stadium. Ballot boxes are located at Turner Field and all other major league ballparks, and fans can vote online at MLB.com. Online voting will continue until July 2 at 11:59 p.m. (Eastern). The starters will be announced July 6. Braves on the ballot are **Brian McCann**, a member of the last two NL All-Star teams, **Mark Teixeira**, **Kelly Johnson**, **Chipper Jones**, **Yunel Escobar**, **Matt Diaz**, **Mark Kotsay** and **Jeff Francoeur**.

FOLLOW THE PLAYERS

Peter Moylan (elbow) was placed on the disabled list April 15, and **Buddy Carlyle** was recalled from Richmond. **Tom Glavine** (hamstring) went on the DL April 18 for the first time in his career, and **Chuck James** was recalled from Richmond the next day. James was optioned to Triple-A April 24, and righthander Phil Stockman was called up to bolster the bullpen, then was sent back to Richmond the following day.

On April 26, the Braves purchased the contract of infielder **Brent Lillibridge** from Richmond and designated minor league righthander **Zack Schreiber** for assignment (he later was sent outright to Richmond). Glavine was activated April 29, and John Smoltz went on the DL (retro to April 28) with inflammation in his upper arm and shoulder. Lillibridge was optioned to Richmond May 3, and **Jo-Jo Reyes** was called up from Triple-A.

Greg Norton was acquired by trade from Seattle May 5, and Moylan was transferred to the 60-day DL, and **Martin Prado** (thumb, out six to eight weeks) went on the DL. Utility infielder **Omar Infante**, who was acquired in the off-season but suffered a broken hand in winter ball, was finally activated May 8. **Brayan Pena** (back sprain) went on the DL. James was called back to Atlanta May 10, and Carlyle went on the DL with a neck strain.

AILING ACE

John Smoltz was honored at the end of the third inning May 3 for becoming the 16th pitcher in history to reach 3,000 strikeouts in his career. **Bobby Cox** presented him a framed jersey with "3,000" on the back. He recorded No. 3,000 April 22 vs. Washington.

However, Smoltz left his April 26 start in the fourth inning due to shoulder pain and had to go on the disabled list April 29 (retro to April 28). He indicated he might never start another game due to the shoulder trouble. He had an MRI and a CT scan and was diagnosed with a severely inflamed bicep tendon and rotator cuff inflammation

and announced he would pitch out of the bullpen when he returned. At press time, he reported significant progress in his throwing program and hoped to be able to pitch by the end of May.

SHORT HOPS

- **Rafael Soriano** was continuing to work his way back from elbow pain. An MRI and bone scan on May 7, a month after he went on the DL, showed that there is no structural damage to the elbow. He was likely to make a short rehab stint and perhaps rejoin the team in the latter part of May.

- **Tom Glavine** moved into 24th place on the all-time strikeout list May 9 at Pittsburgh, passing two Hall of Famers, **Warren Spahn** and **Bob Feller**. He ended the game with 2,584 career strikeouts.

- **Chipper Jones** homered on April 24, his 36th birthday. It was the fourth birthday home run of his career. The only players in history to do it more often are **Al Simmons**, **Derrek Lee** and **Alex Rodriguez**, with five each.

- When the Braves swept three games from the Reds May 2-4 and then took three straight from the Padres May 6-8, it marked their first perfect homestand in five years. Their 5-4 win over San Diego May 8 was their first one-run win of the season after nine one-run losses, the first team in baseball in eight years to lose their first nine one-run decisions. Their 14-4 record at Turner Field was the best in the majors, and their 4-13 record on the road was the worst in baseball.

- **Anthony Lerew** is yet another pitcher making a comeback from elbow ligament replacement surgery. The 25-year-old righthander hopes to return to the mound at Richmond in late July.

- The Braves lost six straight road games before an 8-1 win at Pittsburgh May 12. The Pirates won the season series with Atlanta (5-2) for the first time since 1997.

- **Tim Hudson**'s three-hitter against the Reds May 2 (2-0) was his 11th career complete game.

FRANK WREN
GENERAL MANAGER

OUR JEKYLL AND HYDE ACT HAS TO BE RESOLVED SOON

IT'S BEEN A PRETTY TRYING MONTH and a half with the number of injuries we've had. But we hope to start seeing some improvement soon. Mike Gonzalez pitched well again in extended spring training, and that's exciting. Rafael Soriano and John Smoltz are feeling good. It will be good to get our pitching somewhat back together.

Gonzalez had one setback with a little tenderness that everyone has with that (elbow) surgery, but he rebounded well. He'll pitch one more time in Florida and then go on a rehab assignment.

Soriano's had a couple of good bullpen sessions. We're encouraged the way they've gone. We hope he'll go on a short rehab assignment soon to see if he's ready. We don't want to put him out there in a big league game and lose him for another 15 days if he's not ready.

Smoltz is encouraged with the way his shoulder is feeling, and we hope that continues as he increases intensity and gets up to game speed.

The other part is our Jekyll and Hyde performance at home and on the road. We're playing so well at home, but can't put anything together on the road.

The one thing I take solace in is that as well as we're playing at home, we know it's there. We know we have the ability to compete with anyone. We just need to figure out how to be more consistent.

I know it's driving Bobby (Cox) crazy, but we think we'll get it figured out. Our players are too good and too experienced to let it continue.

I think it's amazing that our guys have held together through so much adversity, especially on the pitching staff, where the majority of the injuries have been. That's why we gathered so many pitchers over the winter, to weather the storms. And they've more than weathered the storm. I don't think you could ask them to pitch better than they have so far. The pitching has done a heck of a job. We just need to start hitting on all cylinders and we'll be fine.

> "THE ONE THING I TAKE SOLACE IN IS THAT AS WELL AS WE'RE PLAYING AT HOME, WE KNOW IT'S THERE."

I think the 25 guys we need to win the division and play in October are on the roster. It's a matter of getting them all going.

I think I have an even more intense attachment to what's going on now than when I was the assistant GM. You have the ultimate responsibility, so you're fully engaged. Not that I wasn't as the assistant, but it's different when the responsibility is fully on your shoulders.

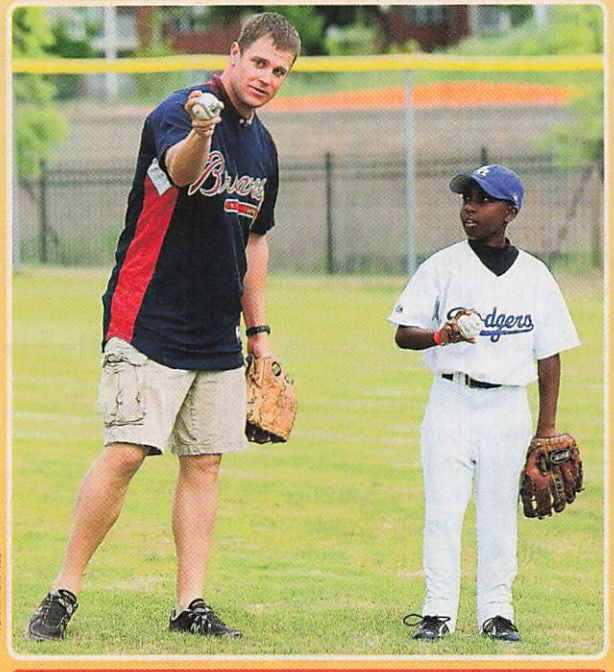
You sit in the chair that's responsible for a regional franchise where almost everyone is a Braves fan. You feel the responsibility to put a good product on the field. It's pretty intense pressure, but it's a good pressure. It's something I enjoy, but nonetheless, you feel it, day in and day out.

I think I'm pretty good at separating my feelings when I go home to my family, but at times, it's impossible. If we've just had a tough loss, I'm not the most pleasant person at dinner. But on a daily basis, I think I do a pretty good job of separating it. After a win, I always feel better at dinner!

We picked up Greg Norton from Seattle. We started looking for someone like him in the spring. It's nice to be able to send guys up there who are professional hitters. They come to the plate and you know they have a chance, regardless of what pitcher they're matched up against. With a professional hitter, it doesn't matter.

Norton probably was number-one on our list. We needed someone like him who can play the corners, too. When Seattle promoted some young players, Norton was the odd man out. As soon as they made that decision, we called them and picked him up.

BASEBALL LESSONS



ATLANTA BRAVES

Jeff Bennett gives a youngster some tips on how to grip and release the ball during a clinic a the villages of Carver YMCA.

GREGOR BLANCO, **Jeff Bennett**, **Ruben Gotay** and **Royce Ring** helped 100 children from the Junior Braves/RBI Youth Baseball League celebrate opening day of the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy's season on May 3 with a clinic. The players gave the kids instruction in throwing, hitting, and baserunning skills.

Now in its fourth season, the Junior Braves/RBI Youth Baseball League, sponsored by Delta Air Lines, has expanded to include more than 20 teams, creating a community partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, the Metro Atlanta YMCA, and Major League Baseball's Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI). More than 2,000 kids, ages 5-18, will have the opportunity to play baseball this summer through the Junior Braves/RBI program. Teams are formed in underserved neighborhoods where recreation programs are most needed.

The Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy facilities include four baseball fields, funded by **Chipper Jones**, **Brian Jordan**, **Mike Hampton** and **John Smoltz**, each of whom contributed $75,000 to the Metro Atlanta YMCA, bringing an eight-acre signature youth sports complex to the heart of the redeveloped Carver community near Turner Field. The Atlanta Braves Foundation contributed $500,000, and the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, a collaborative initiative between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, contributed $144,000 to support the academy.

LUNCH TIME

The next Braves Power Lunch presented by Publix is scheduled June 20 at Maggiano's in Buckhead (3368 Peachtree Rd.). Tickets are $35, and those who attend receive a gift pack that includes one item autographed by one of the Power Lunch participants. **John Smoltz**, **Blaine Boyer**, **Greg Norton** and **Brian Snitker** attended the first luncheon May 23. Fans also receive lunch and can participate in a Q&A with the Braves personnel.

Proceeds benefit the charitable Braves Foundation. Tickets can be purchased by calling (404) 614-1370 or by visiting Braves.com/powerlunch. Other Power Lunch dates this year are July 31, Aug. 15 and Sept. 11.

FORE! CHARITY

The third annual Atlanta Braves Foundation Golf Classic was played May 5 at Reynolds Landing and raised $158,000 to support the Atlanta Braves Foundation's youth outreach efforts and numerous charitable causes.

PAUL ABELL

Royce Ring lines up a putt during the Atlanta Braves Foundation Golf Classic.

Braves participants included **Frank Wren**, **Roger McDowell**, **Terry Pendleton**, **Brian Snitker**, **Matt Diaz**, **Jeff Bennett**, **Jair Jurrjens**, **Buddy Carlyle**, **Royce Ring**, **Ruben Gotay**, **Will Ohman**, **Pete Smith** (RHP, 1987-93), **Greg McMichael** (RHP, 1993-96, 2000), **Paul Assenmacher** (LHP, 1986-89), **Jeff Treadway** (2B, 1989-92), **Brad Clontz** (RHP, 1995-97) and **Zane Smith** (LHP, 1984-89).

The Atlanta Braves Foundation will donate proceeds from the event to several metro Atlanta charitable organizations through the Foundation's Grants Program in September.

BUS STOP

About 50 children from the Boys and Girls Club of Central Alabama visited Turner Field on May 7, meeting players including **Jeff Francoeur** and **Mark Teixeira** as part of the Major League Baseball Players Trust's "Buses for Baseball" program.

The program provides transportation and a once-in-a-lifetime experience to more than 1,500 underprivileged children in the United States and Canada, many of who are visiting ballparks for the first time.

STRONG FOUNDATION

The Atlanta Braves Foundation is accepting 2008 grant applications. Applications are available at Braves.com/grants, and the deadline for submissions is July 31. In 2007 the Atlanta Braves Foundation granted a total of $98,000 to 18 local non-profit organizations.

The Atlanta Braves Foundation will consider granting funds to youth-serving organizations that focus on health, education, and recreation; that have sound financial practices; and whose plans for the requested funds will have a significant impact upon the individuals served by the requesting organization. The Foundation makes grants to non-profit, tax-exempt organizations in Georgia under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

BALLS & STRIKES

- The Braves announced that there will be no inductions into the franchise Hall of Fame this year.
- **Frank Wren** spoke to the Atlanta Press Club during a May 7 luncheon at the Commerce Club in downtown Atlanta.
- This year's Baseball 101, designed to help women learn more about baseball, was held May 17 at Turner Field.
- **Sabrina Jenkins**, the Braves' director of special events, was the keynote speaker for the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc. (GMSDC) Professional Services Industry Group Executive Forum held at Georgia Power's downtown office April 25.
- According to Forbes magazine, the Atlanta Braves have an estimated team value of $497 million and are the seventh-most valuable team in Major League Baseball. The Yankees topped the Forbes list with a value of $1.3 billion.
- The first Bark in the Park was scheduled May 18 at Turner Field, and another is set for Sept. 7. Fans must register in advance in order to be able to bring their dogs to the game.

BOBBY COX

MANAGER

IT'S TIME FOR SMOLTZ TO RETURN TO THE 'PEN

AFTER THE GREAT NIGHT when we watched John Smoltz earn his 3,000th strikeout, it turns out we need to move him to the bullpen. He was pitching so well as a starter, and selfishly, I wanted him to start. But common sense tells me he's reached the point that he should be the guy who has the ball at the end of the game.

John's a gamer. He's going to give us everything he's got. It would be very easy for him to say, "I'm done," but he doesn't want to be done. Hopefully, he'll pitch again next season, too.

John pitched probably three quarters of his career with a bad arm, but he's fought through it, and you have to admire him for that.

Moving Smoltz to the bullpen isn't something we're too worried about. He's worked there before and was brilliant. He'll fill the closer role since Rafael Soriano isn't completely healthy either.

Soriano resumed his throwing after being checked again by the doctors. Knowing that his arm is structurally sound is great. But a sore arm is still a sore arm. It's bothering him some, but knowing that there's nothing wrong with it will relieve a lot of the mental pressure.

I believe we'll see Mike Gonzalez pitching again by the end of May. He's had a quick recovery from Tommy John surgery, and he's been throwing since spring training and hasn't had any major setbacks. Whenever he feels like he's ready to help, that's when we'll see him.

He stayed in Orlando and got a lot of throwing in. We want him at 100 percent. He needs to go out and get his pitching in at Triple A, become dominant, and then we'll see. We'd love to have him come back sooner, but we have to go through that process.

> "ON THE UP SIDE, IT DOES HAVE THE MAKINGS OF BEING THE BEST BULLPEN IN ALL OF BASEBALL, IF EVERYTHING WORKS OUT."

Once we get Soriano and Gonzalez back, we'll put all the pieces together. On the up side, it does have the makings of being the best bullpen in all of baseball, if everything works out.

Tom Glavine was determined to pitch and didn't like going on the disabled list one bit. But I thought his streak of never being on the DL in his career needed to come to an end in order for him to be better down the road. Tommy understood, but he didn't want to do it.

You know, between Greg Maddux, Glavine and Smoltz, I've been the luckiest guy in the world. I've hung on to my job because of them. Without them, I'm like anyone else - I'm gonna get fired!

Losing Smoltz opened a hole in our rotation, but we think we can fill it with the guys we have. Jo-Jo Reyes has thrown well. We have Jeff Bennett and Buddy Carlyle who have given us some good innings. We built up a huge surplus of pitching, as much as we could. You can never have too much, as this season has proven again.

Chipper Jones is in a groove like I've never seen. I watched George Brett and Tony Gwynn forever. Those are the guys I compare him to in my life in baseball. They were guys who didn't miss pitches and hit them hard.

Mark Kotsay has been a terrific player. He's a way above average centerfielder. He never makes a mistake, and he's found a way to hit .300. He's a great guy to have around. He's a remarkable, fundamentally sound player. You don't see that all the time.

I think the surprise team in baseball has to be the Florida Marlins. They lost their number-one pitcher (Dontrelle Willis) and their number-one hitter (Miguel Cabrera), didn't replace them with a big name, and look where they are - first place. It shows what a great job our friend Fredi Gonzalez is doing!

PLAYING PEPPER

MARK KOTSAY

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: Is being back in the National League for the first time in five years much of an adjustment, or is it just baseball – regardless of the league?

MARK KOTSAY: I think it's pretty much all baseball. I think with an extra hitter in the lineup in the American League, it tends to be a little more offensive-minded throughout the lineup where there's not a guarantee of an out. I think that it would make a bigger impact on the pitching staff as opposed to position players. When you bat in the eighth spot in the National League, it's a little different from batting in the eighth spot in the American League, because you don't have a pitcher hitting behind you. You have an actual hitter behind you, and it changes the scenario.

CT: You've played almost every game with no apparent signs of trouble with your back that was operated on last spring (ruptured disc). Has it given you any trouble at all? How do you feel physically compared to last year?

KOTSAY: I feel good. I wouldn't account for last season because I had surgery prior to the season - 22 days prior to the season to be exact. There wasn't a real definition of when I should start back. So I took it upon myself to be back as soon as possible and

Kotsay hit home runs in consecutive games May 4 and 6, the first time he'd done so since July 9-10, 2005.

probably came back too soon. From a standpoint of physical health, it's a new year, it's a new beginning, and at this point in the season, I'm happy with how I'm holding up from a health standpoint.

CT: Do you think you're back to where you want to be, to the level you were playing before you hurt your back?

KOTSAY: I'm a career .282 hitter in the big leagues, so if I can have that type of a year, I'd be very happy with the outcome at the end. So far, I'm on track, but I don't get too involved in the personal records this early in the season. There's a lot that can happen. So many times players get off to a great start only to finish bad. No one remembers the great start, just the finishing bad. And vice versa. You can get off to a bad start in April, but you have a great September, and that's the last thing people remember.

> "THE FANS TALK TO ME. I'VE BEEN FORTUNATE TO GET OFF TO A GOOD START, SO IT KEEPS THEM FROM BOOING AND SAYING, 'WE WANT ANDRUW!'"

CT: Some outfielders have trouble following the ball in the early evening at Turner Field. Has playing here been an adjustment at all?

KOTSAY: I haven't made any adjustments to this point, but I'd played in this stadium numerous times coming in as a visiting player and never seemed to have any issues. But I can see how twilight could have an effect. The opportunity is there to lose a flyball against the sky color. Fortunately, at this point, we haven't had that complication.

CT: What do you remember about playing in Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium during the 1996 Olympics?

KOTSAY: The best memory probably came when we walked in the stadium for our first game. We were playing Nicaragua, a team we'd played 25 to 30 times prior to the Olympics. The most memorable moment was coming through the left field fence with the crowd on their feet, probably 56,000 people, chanting, "USA! USA!" The excitement, the chills and the adrenaline were pretty overwhelming.

CT: What is it like to represent your country? Does it feel different from playing on a major league team?

KOTSAY: It's completely different. I was 20 years old, had USA across my chest, and understood that the world was watching as opposed to just our nation. And then that you're representing the nation in a way that only 25 people get to do every four years is a great thrill. It's something that I treasure very much. The group of guys I played with... I think 23 of the 25 are in the big leagues or had big league time. We had a great time, and it's a great memory for me.

CT: Did you ever imagine you'd be playing for the Atlanta Braves over a decade later?

KOTSAY: You can't predict the future, but for the most part, the way my career has gone, I felt that the Braves would be a team I could possibly end up playing for later in my career because they have a tradition of playing the game with fundamental and sound players with lots of veteran guys. I knew Bobby (Cox) liked veteran guys.

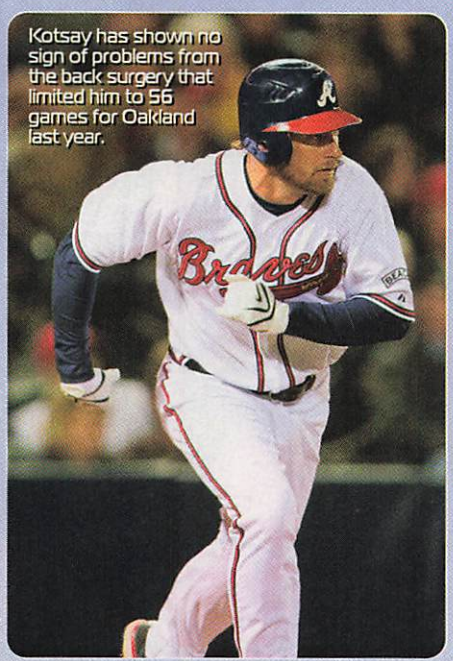
CT: How do you like living in Atlanta so far?

KOTSAY: From the standpoint of being comfortable, I'm very comfortable here. But I'm a West Coast person, and I don't think anyone can take that out of me. My family is all on the West Coast, but with that exception, I do like Atlanta.

CT: You said at the Braves Leadoff Luncheon that it wasn't until you got to Atlanta that you decided that you might want to come back to Atlanta next season. Is that something you would actively pursue?

KOTSAY: This is the last year of my contract, so I'll be a free agent at the end of the season. We'll explore all our options, and from a family standpoint, the West Coast makes the most sense. But I would not eliminate playing here and playing for Bobby and this organization.

CT: That's the second time you've mentioned playing for Bobby Cox. Is playing for him living up to what you'd heard about him as a manager?



Kotsay has shown no sign of problems from the back surgery that limited him to 56 games for Oakland last year.

PAUL ABELL

KOTSAY: Without a doubt. Across the board, I can understand why guys would love an opportunity to play here and go out of their way to remain here. He creates an atmosphere that I feel, from a veteran player's perspective, leads to a lot of success. He's 100 percent supportive of everything you do when you do it the right way, and that's all you can ask from a manager.

CT: How did you develop such an accurate arm?

KOTSAY: I developed a lot of arm strength in college and have always been able to maintain it. If you look at my professional career, looking at the statistics alone, no one in the major leagues since 1998 has thrown out more people than I have (Kotsay's 112 assists are the most of any major league outfielder in that span). I take a lot of pride in playing defense and going out there, preparing myself every day. I try to put myself in the right situations, mentally thinking through the game before it happens, so that the reaction is right. You're not going to be 100 percent accurate, but when you go out there with a purpose of doing things correctly, the preparation usually translates into your game.

CT: You said before the season that you weren't even trying to replace Andruw Jones. How have the fans in the Turner Field bleachers been to you? Have you had any comments from them about replacing Andruw?

KOTSAY: Oh, yeah. The fans talk to me. I've been fortunate to get off to a good start, so it keeps them from booing and saying, "We want Andruw!" (Laughs) I knew I would get some of it because of the way he played, the tradition and the greatness he left in the outfield. I was fully prepared for anything, but fortunately it's been positive.

CT: Other than San Diego, where you make your home, what's your favorite city to visit in either league – and why?

KOTSAY: Seattle's pretty great, another West Coast city. The ballpark is probably in the top three on my list. The city is clean, and the water, I'm a big water person, is beautiful. It seems like a pretty good pace of life, which I'm a fan of, as well.

CT: Your dad (Steve) had a career in law enforcement as a motorcycle policeman in Los Angeles. Is that what you would like to have done if you hadn't made a career in baseball?

KOTSAY: Absolutely, 100 percent. To this day, I still feel that it's in my blood to follow in the lines of my father and maybe even further it by going into the U.S. Marshals Service. Baseball worked out, but I often kid my wife (Jamie) that when my baseball career is over, I'm going to go through the police academy just so I can get the badge!

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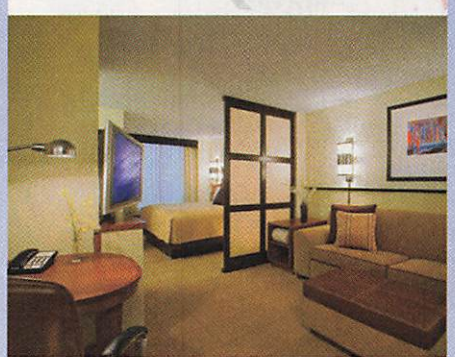

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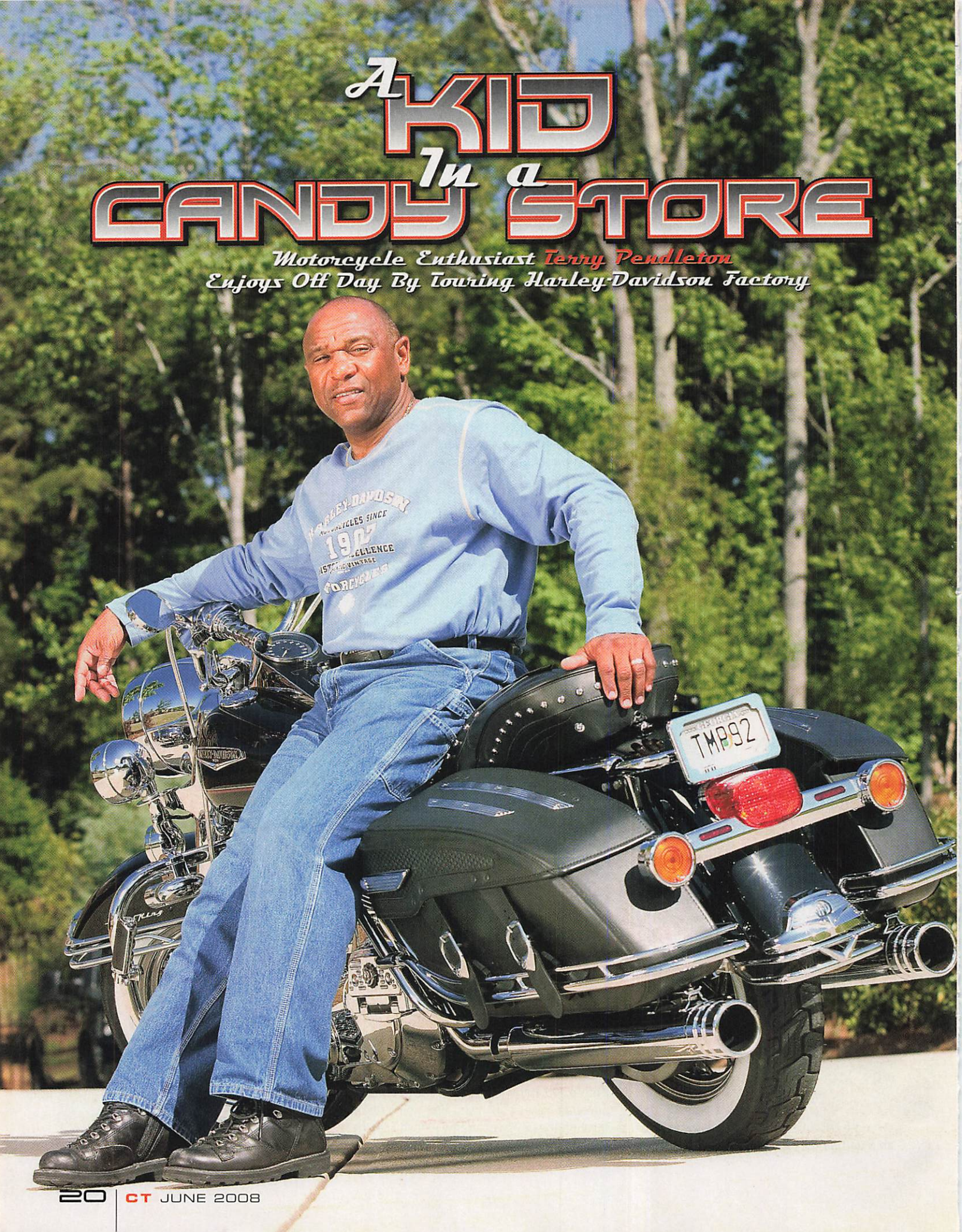
A Kid In a Candy Store

Motorcycle Enthusiast Terry Pendleton Enjoys Off Day By Touring Harley-Davidson Factory



BY MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN

THE BRAVES' off day in Washington on April 28 (created by the game originally scheduled for that day being moved to Mar. 30 for the opening of Nationals Park) was the kind of off day that baseball players loathe. The rain came in gusts, didn't let up, and foiled many players' golfing plans.

Hitting coach Terry Pendleton had plans of a different sort - to join a local rider for a motorcycle excursion out of D.C. and toward the Chesapeake Bay. He'd packed his helmet, gloves and black Harley-Davidson boots for the Braves' road trip that began April 25 in New York, but to his dismay, his plans were called off, as well.

"I would have ridden in this," said Pendleton, looking out a car window at the dreary weather.

Instead, he took another kind of trip - one that he's wanted to do for years. He took the 90-mile journey from Washington to the Harley-Davidson Vaughn L. Beals Tour Center in York, Penn. Wearing his riding boots, Harley shirt and jeans, the former Braves third baseman (1991-94, '96) and 1991 National League MVP and batting champ escaped the downpours in the Harley-Davidson factory showroom, where he sat on (and looked longingly at) several 2008 models. Then Pendleton toured the manufacturing facility.

Don, the guide, took a small group around the factory floor, past robot-operated stations that press out fenders and polish footboards. Pendleton saw where all Harley "jiffy stands," or kickstands, are made, how the fuel tanks are trimmed and welded, and where the chrome parts are produced.

"Bikes are sent all over the world from this factory," Don said, walking the group past the 48-station assembly line, where shiny new bikes hung from J-hooks. The line moves at a rate of six feet every minute, and at the end, each bike is road tested - the final inspection before it's sent to a dealer.

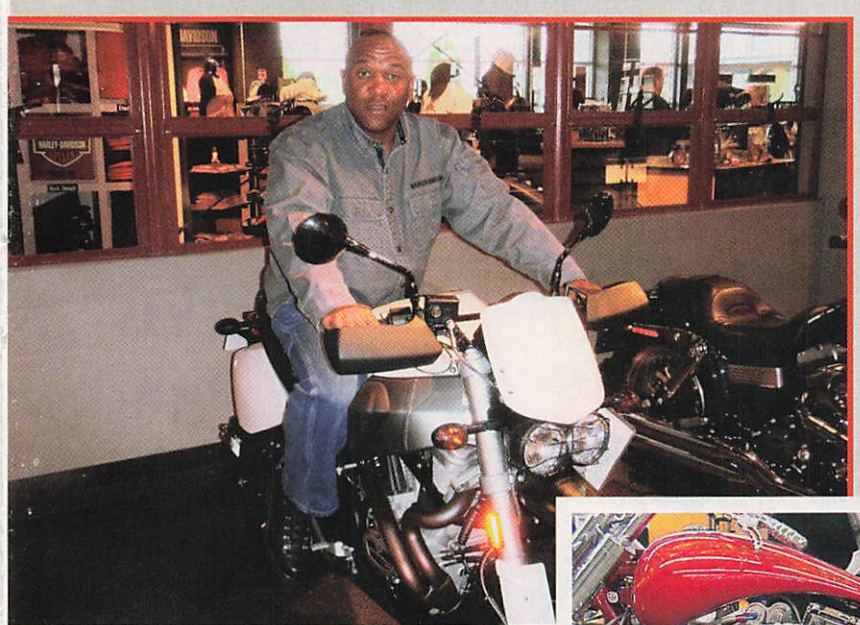
The road test actually occurs on a test bay in the factory. A rider places the bike on steel rollers and rides for two minutes, reaching 90 mph. He checks the engine, transmission and electrical system, and typically rides 40 to 50 new bikes a day.

"Now that's a good job," said Pendleton, who is in his seventh season as the Braves' hitting coach. "I would do that all winter for free."

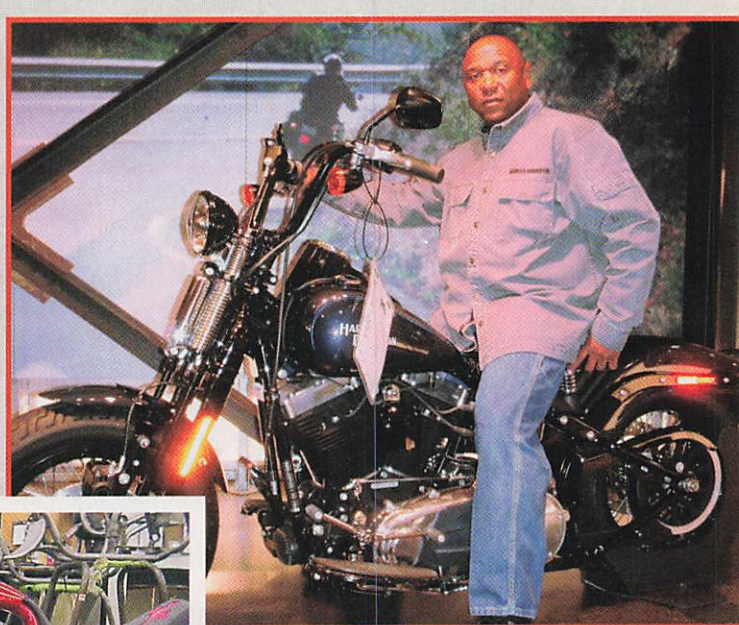
The motorcycle bug was planted in Pendleton, 47, when he was growing up in Southern California. His grandfather, who rode a Honda and was part of a local motorcycle club, used to put Pendleton on the back of his bike and take off for short rides.

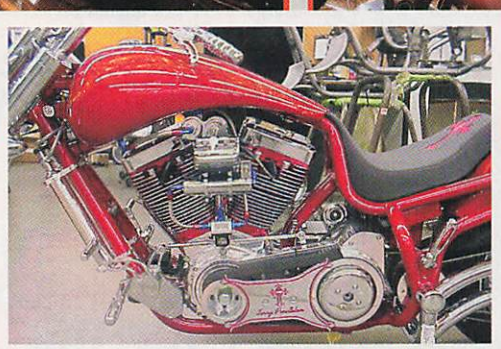
"That got my juices flowing," Pendleton said. "Then I got into football and basketball, and I never really thought about riding a motorcycle again."

In the winter of 1986, when he was playing for the St. Louis Cardinals, Pendleton went home to California and rode his god brother's bike, and that's when he realized one day he'd have a motorcycle of his own.



MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN





Pendleton tries on some new Harleys for size during an off day visit to the company's factory and tour center in York, Pa. He says his custom Bourget Fat Daddy Beach Cruiser (L) "shows a little more rebel in me."

Yet he also knew that one day would be years away - because active Major League Baseball players are prohibited from riding motorcycles, per their contracts.

However, after Pendleton retired following the 1998 season, he was free to ride, even after he signed on as a Braves coach in 2002. He and his wife Catherine (who had ridden mopeds as a teenager) took a riding class during the winter of 2000. Pendleton had just bought a black Harley-Davidson Road King Classic 1600 the week before from a dealer in Marietta, Ga. Catherine was three months pregnant with their third child.

"Since then, it's been like an addiction," Pendleton said. "I have an itch, and I have to get out (riding)."

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

The couple rides together (on his bike, although Catherine has her own) every once in a blue moon, but for Pendleton, the motorcycle is mostly a means of transportation and a way to escape.

He rides 70 miles round-trip from his home in Snellville, east of Atlanta, to Turner Field and back, and also rides into the Georgia mountains with friends when he has time (Florida Marlins manager Fredi Gonzalez, the Braves former third base coach, is a regular riding buddy). The day after Thanksgiving and New Year's Day are traditional riding days for the crew.

"We don't do it for the adrenaline rush like some guys," he said. "We do it for relaxation."

Pendleton rides his Harley and a Bourget's Fat Daddy Beach Cruiser, which he said is a totally different ride.

"The Road King is like sitting in a lounge chair," he said. "The Bourget's custom shows a little more rebel in me, and people stop to look at it. It's a whole different flair."

The custom, which was built in six months at Bourget's Bike Works in Phoenix (and was back at the factory for maintenance when this story was reported), is a deep candy apple red and has a picture of Catherine and their three children (Stephanie, Terry and Trinity) painted on the rear fender. Pendleton said it's the most expensive toy he's ever bought.

Although riding doesn't get in the way of Pendleton's coaching, former Braves president Stan Kasten, now president of the Washington Nationals, used to let Pendleton know how he felt about motorcycles.

"He got on me about riding all the time," Pendleton said. "He'd say, 'You're going to get hurt on that thing.' And I'd say, 'Stan, let's be positive.'"

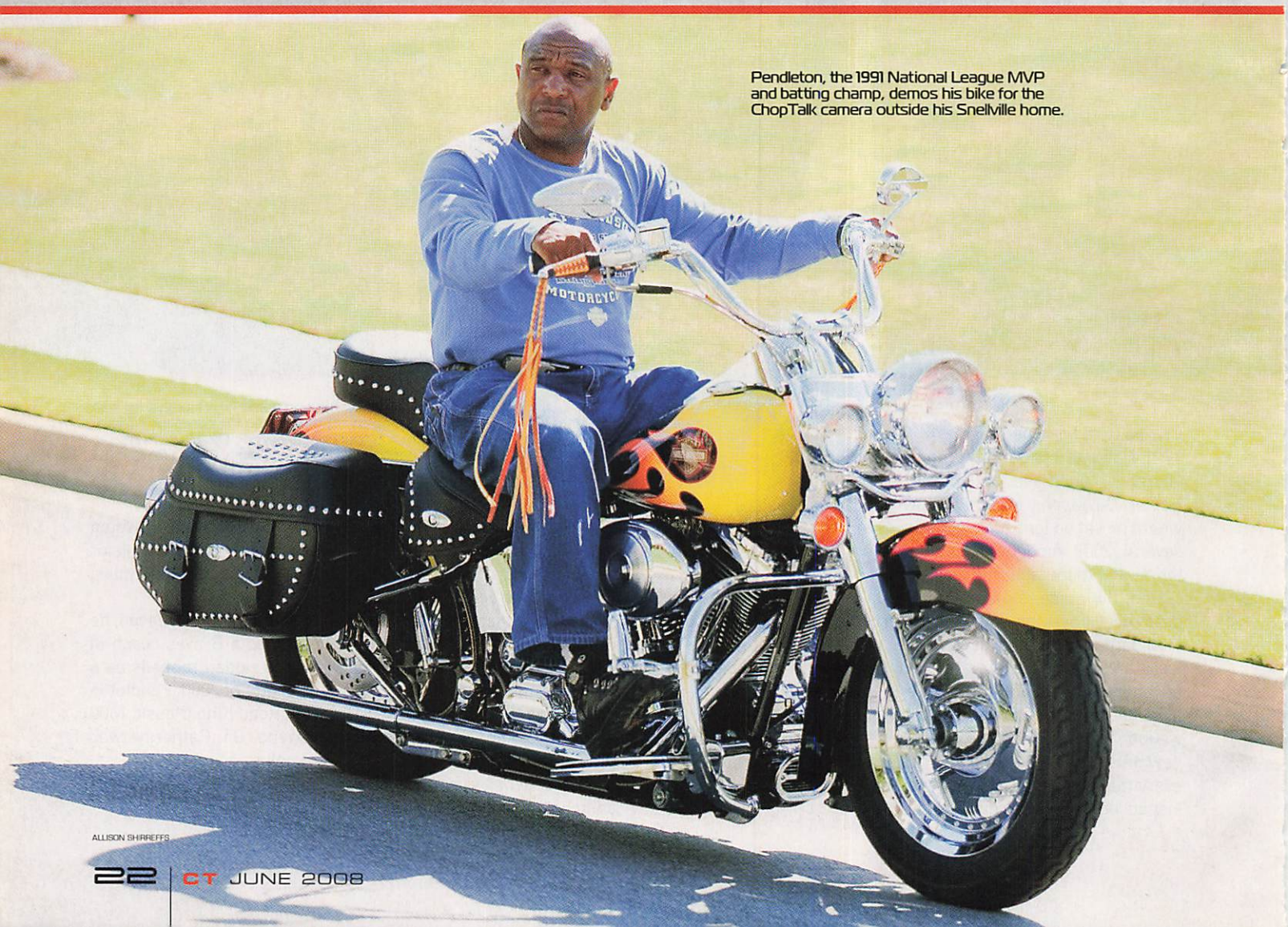
Players and coaches are expected to wear a collared shirt when they go to Turner Field, so Pendleton wears a heavyweight Harley-Davidson collared shirt when he rides to the ballpark. He parks his bike in the tunnel behind the right-field bleachers, where the grounds crew keeps its equipment.

During spring training, players tend to envy Pendleton's freedom to ride. He takes his bikes to Florida in a trailer and said he's out the door on his way to the ballpark at Disney's Wide World of Sports, helmet strapped, at 4:45 a.m. Conveniently, Daytona Beach Bike Week coincides with spring training, so Pendleton turns down offers to tee up in his spare time and heads to the bike show.

"They just can't get me to play golf," he said. "No, thanks. On the bike, I can just disappear."

But there's one ride Pendleton hopes to take that puts him smack in the center of the limelight, instead of outside it. Bobby Cox told Pendleton during the 2004 season that when the team goes to the World Series the next time, he can ride one of the motorcycles in the police escort, from Turner Field to the airport.

"That would be my dream," Pendleton said. "Not just to ride the bike, but because we're in the Series."



Pendleton, the 1991 National League MVP and batting champ, demos his bike for the ChopTalk camera outside his Snellville home.

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

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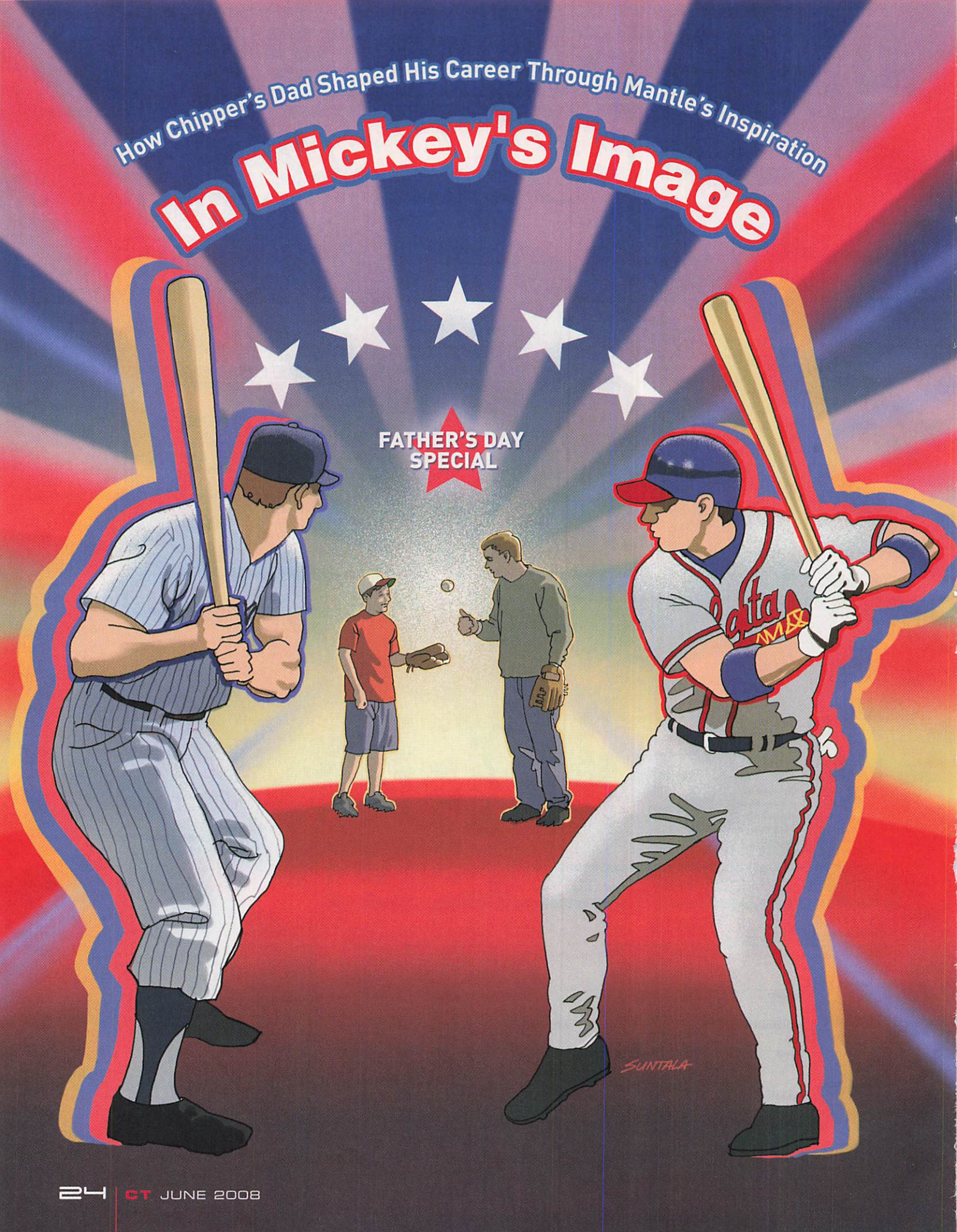
How Chipper's Dad Shaped His Career Through Mantle's Inspiration

In Mickey's Image



BY JEFF BERLINICKE

Long before Chipper Jones began preparing his impressive resume for inspection by Cooperstown voters, he was a teenager playing Babe Ruth League baseball.

He was crushing the ball from the right side of the plate, but not doing so well from the left side. He'd been a switch-hitter since the age of 7, but his coach told him to change and only hit right-handed. Chipper went to his dad, Larry, and the coach's suggestion was quickly ruled out of the question.

"Batting only right-handed was never an option," Larry said. "He was a switch-hitter, and that's what he always wanted to be."

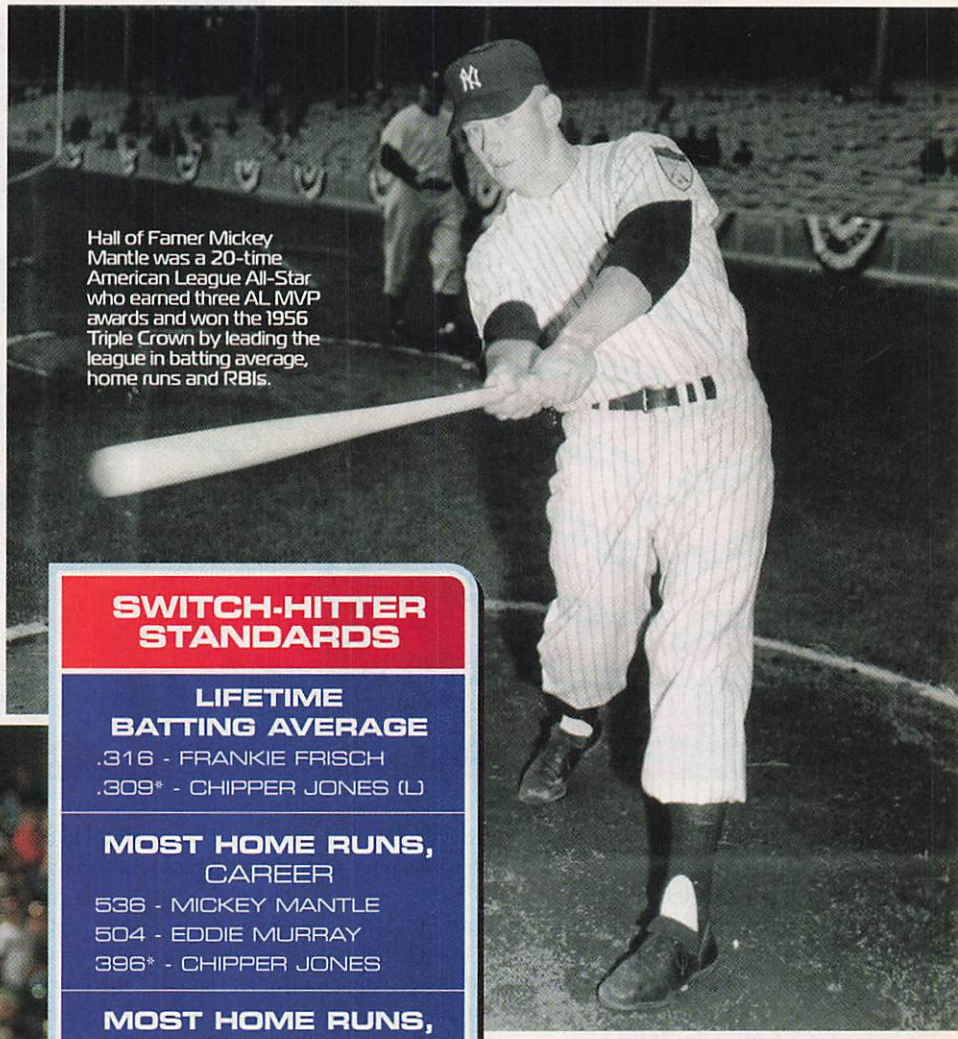
Chipper was destined to be a switch-hitter long before he was born back in 1972.

Legendary Yankees Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle was Larry's hero. Mantle was one of the great switch-hitters in history, and though he retired three years before Chipper's birth, Larry never forgot him.

It's amazing to the Joneses - father and son - that Chipper is closing in on, not only Mantle's numbers, but also those of Hall of Famer Eddie Murray and all-time hit king Pete Rose, two of the other greatest switch-hitters.

Entering this season, Jones had a career .307 batting average to go with 386 home runs, 2,117 hits, and 1,299 RBIs. He also led the world with a .415 batting average at this writing after nearly winning the NL batting title last season.

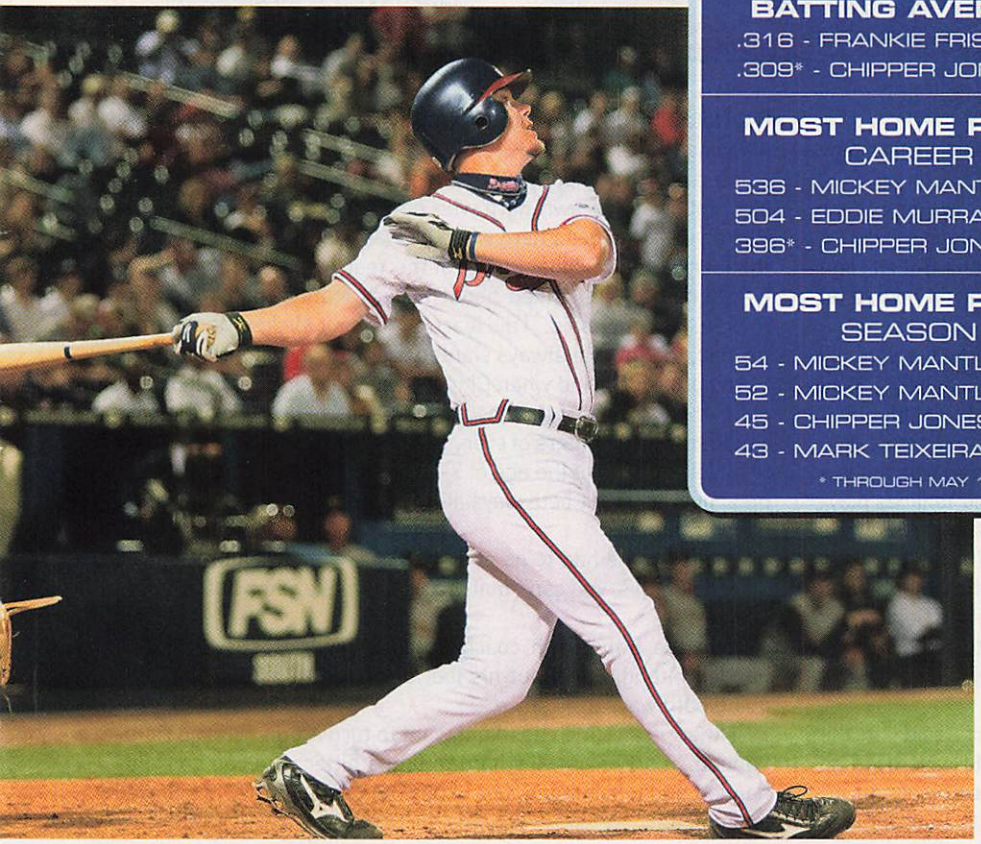
Let's compare: Rose compiled 4,256 hits, which is out of Jones' reach, but he also finished with a career .303 batting average, four points under Chipper's lifetime average through 2007. Murray ended with a .287 average, 504 homers and 3,255 hits.



Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle was a 20-time American League All-Star who earned three AL MVP awards and won the 1956 Triple Crown by leading the league in batting average, home runs and RBIs.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

PAUL ABELL



SWITCH-HITTER STANDARDS

LIFETIME BATTING AVERAGE

.316 - FRANKIE FRISCH
.309* - CHIPPER JONES (L)

MOST HOME RUNS, CAREER

536 - MICKEY MANTLE
504 - EDDIE MURRAY
396* - CHIPPER JONES

MOST HOME RUNS, SEASON

54 - MICKEY MANTLE, 1961
52 - MICKEY MANTLE, 1956
45 - CHIPPER JONES, 1999
43 - MARK TEIXEIRA, 2003

* THROUGH MAY 13

Assuming Jones, now 36, plays for five more years, he can come close to matching Murray's numbers. As for Mantle, Chipper is about two years from passing him in hits (2,415) and RBIs (1,509).

So where does that place Jones on the list of all-time switch-hitters? For starters, he's the greatest power-hitting switch-hitter in National League history since he already holds the NL records for home runs in a season (45 in 1999) and for a career (396 and counting).

But it always comes back to Mantle, whose career was cut short due to knee injuries. He was

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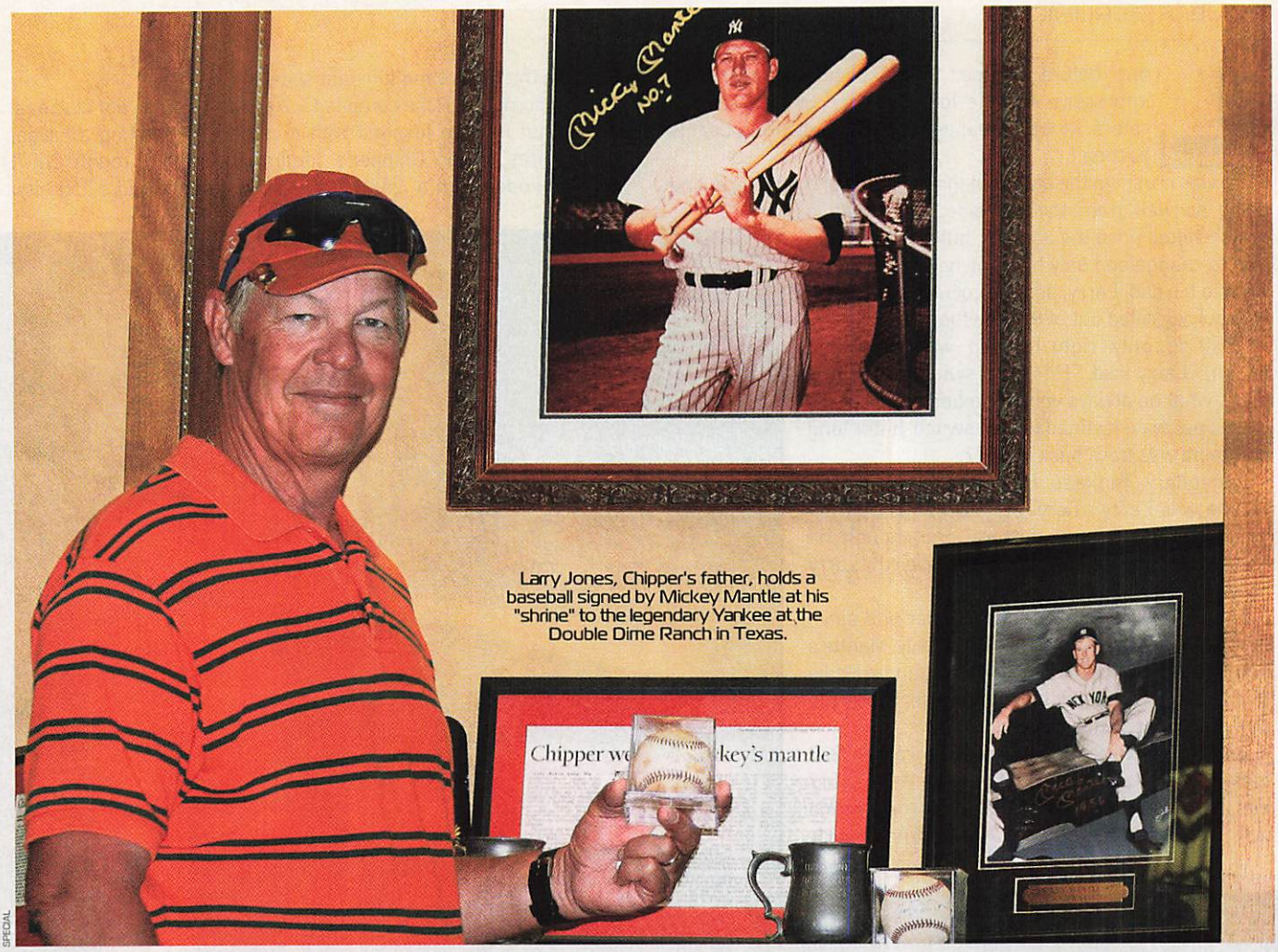

Larry Jones, Chipper's father, holds a baseball signed by Mickey Mantle at his "shrine" to the legendary Yankee at the Double Dime Ranch in Texas.

SPECIAL

Larry's hero, and he passed that on to Chipper.

"Mickey Mantle was my father's hero," Chipper said. "That's how I became a switch-hitter."

Larry, who coached baseball at Stetson University near DeLand, Fla., where Chipper was raised before he moved to Jacksonville to play prep baseball at the prestigious Bolles High School, started to drill Chipper when he was a boy on how to hit from both sides of the plate.

"Mickey Mantle was my hero," Larry said. "There's a song by the country singer Roy Clark called, 'Yesterday When I Was Young.' Every time I hear that it reminds me of Mickey Mantle. I always bawl like a baby when I hear that. He was the greatest."

Long before Chipper came along, Larry knew his son would be a switch-hitter. He grew up watching the Dodgers and Yankees playing in the World Series almost every year, or so it seemed. Larry is convinced that Mantle could have broken Babe Ruth's home run record of 60 back in the magical year of 1961 when Mantle and teammate Roger Maris were going head-to-head into September battling for the record. Mantle's leg broke down late in the season, and he had to settle for 54 homers while Maris hit No. 61 on the last day of the regular season.

"Mickey Mantle could have had 61 easily," Larry said. "In the 1950s, Mantle was the face of the game. He could have been so much greater if it hadn't been for the leg injury. Once Chipper decided he wanted to be a switch-hitter like Mickey Mantle, I was thrilled. But I told him he had to commit to it, and that Babe Ruth coach wasn't going to change him."

Interestingly, Chipper, who never had the chance to see Mantle play, followed his own hero who never was a switch-hitter. Cal Ripken was Chipper's hero when he was growing up and winning the Florida High School Player of the Year Award in 1990.

"My dad always talked about Mickey Mantle, but I liked Cal Ripken," Chipper said. "I did learn a lot about Mickey Mantle from my dad, though. He always wanted me to be a switch-hitter."

The project started when Chipper was a kid and Larry took him out to the hay barn at their house in DeLand to practice hitting. He would mimic the hitters of every team in baseball but started to try to hit left-handed at the age of 7. Larry told Chipper at age 13 that he should try to hit both ways all the time, but he gave Chipper a word of caution.

"I told him he had to go at it full-time," Larry said. "Once you start doing this, you can't quit, but it will make you a better baseball player."

Then the Babe Ruth coach urged Chipper to stick to right-handed hitting, Larry put his foot down, and Chipper has been going both ways ever since.

"I knew in a crunch he might want to turn around and go right-handed," Larry said. "It's hard to find a hitter who can go right-handed and left-handed, but I knew he could do it if he believed in himself."

Chipper said it was all for the best, and he never considered turning back.

"It's natural to me now," said Chipper, the Braves' No. 1 draft pick (and first overall player) in 1990. "It wasn't at the start, but my dad helped me a lot and I don't think about it much anymore."

As Chipper's numbers continue to soar with several more productive years likely to come, Chipper isn't paying much attention to the stats, but Larry admits he is.

"To have my son mentioned in the same sentence as Mickey Mantle is just legendary to me," Larry said. "It doesn't mean as much to Chipper as it does to me, but it means a lot to me. Chipper is aware of where he is, but he doesn't care as much as I do."

Chipper has some help this year from arguably the second-best switch-hitter in baseball. The Braves traded for first baseman Mark Teixeira last season, and Teixeira is now firmly entrenched as the cleanup man in the Atlanta batting order. He hit 17 homers in only 45 games last season after coming over from the Texas Rangers last July. In 2005, he hit 43 homers for Texas, third to Mantle and Chipper on the all-time season list for switch-hitters. Don Mattingly was Teixeira's role model as a kid, but he says he never patterned himself after anyone but himself. He knew Mantle was also a switch-hitter, but it was Mattingly that he thought about.

"I didn't really pattern myself after Mickey Mantle," Teixeira said. "Everyone's swing is so different, so you just can't copy a swing. I just worked and found a comfortable stance and a comfortable swing. It works for me, but switch-hitting helped me get to where I am."

Bobby Cox played with Mantle for the Yankees during Mantle's last season in 1968. He said he loves having two switch-hitters who can hammer more than 30 homers in the heart of the lineup.

"I saw Mantle at the end of his career, but we have some pretty good hitters right now," Cox said. "To have two guys in the heart of our order who go both ways is great. It gives me a lot of options. Mantle was great, so I am not making comparisons."

Chipper Jones may be Larry Jones' favorite player – at least in the new millennium. However, his memories and his heart still are with Mantle.

"Do you know how good he could have been if he hadn't gotten hurt?" Larry said. "He could have been the greatest ever."

His son isn't doing a bad job of maintaining Mantle's legacy.

BATTER UP!

GREGOR BLANCO

YOU HAVE TO ADJUST, BUT THEN LET IT GO

I WAS ALWAYS PRETTY FAST, but I used to like to rollerblade, and I think I got my speed from that.

When I was around 12 or 13 years old, I used to rollerblade a lot, and my legs got strong from that. I liked the speed and gliding of the rollerblade. The movement you use really gave me strength in my legs. I don't rollerblade anymore, because it's too dangerous.

I love to steal bases. I think I will have a lot of opportunities to steal bases here. I don't feel (totally confident) yet. I'm still getting to learn my way around the team, the stadiums. But I think when I get to that point, I'll do a good job.

I've worked on hitting to all parts of the field. I think choking up helped me with developing the bat control I have now. I've been working with Terry Pendleton and hitting off the tee, and that's been a big help.

In the games, I just try to see the ball and hit it. I'm a smart hitter, too, I think. Sometimes they pitch me inside, and I try to look for that fastball in and drive it to right field. Drive the ball the other way. That's my game.

Choking up on the bat helps me feel balanced. I don't choke up too far, just a little bit. My bat is 33 1/2 inches long and weighs 31 ounces. So probably when I'm choking up, it shortens the bat to 33 inches. But I like to have a little bit of wood under my grip.

I started taping my bat handle last year. It helped me hold onto my bat, and I think it helps me feel more balanced holding my bat. I use a double-sided sticky tape, and wrap the handle twice with the tape. The tape makes the handle feel thicker in my hands.

> "THE MOST EXCITING THING SO FAR WAS MY FIRST GAME AS A STARTER. I LOOKED AROUND AND SAID, 'I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE!'"

I wear batting gloves, too. It makes me feel comfortable to have the thicker handle. It's all about making my stance stable and balanced.

I want to feel secure at the plate, and I want to have fun playing the game. I think if you have fun, everything works out. It's a hard game. Every single at-bat you have to make adjustments, but then you have to let it go. You're going to have a lot of at-bats. Every day you have to approach the game positive mentally.

I talked to Chino Cadahia about how to stay strong mentally when you're out in front of so many people. He helped me a lot in winter ball in Venezuela. We were playing in front 35,000 to 40,000 people, and (the fans) really gave me a lot of support. They screamed my name when I'd get a hit, and it really helped me in getting used to playing in front of the crowds in Atlanta.

I grew up in the Braves organization, and I really hope to play my whole career in one place. The fans love it when a player stays with one organization for their whole career, like Chipper Jones or John Smoltz. Every time they come to the plate, the fans love them.

We have a great group of young players, and a lot from Latin countries. We've known each other a long time and are very good friends. I hope we play together for a long time. But even if we have to go other places, we'll always stay friends.

The most exciting thing so far was my first game as a starter (April 18 against the Dodgers). I looked around and said, "I can't believe I'm here!" But then you have to say, "Well, you are here and you need to play your game."

I love to travel with the team. I love everything about the game. I didn't really have a favorite player when I was growing up. I loved playing baseball, but I liked a lot of different things, too. But being from Venezuela, the biggest player to me was probably Andres Galarraga.

My family still lives in Venezuela. They've been so happy for me and proud of me.

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SMOLTZ 16TH TO 3,000 BUT SIXTH IN RATE; CHIPPER WILL BE RARE 400-CLUB MEMBER

BY STEVE FALL

AMONG THE THOUSANDS of players who have reached the major leagues in over 130 years, only the very best join elite groups like the 3,000-strikeout or 400-homer clubs. The Braves will soon have *active* members of both.

When John Smoltz recorded his 3,000th strikeout on April 22, he became the 16th pitcher to reach that esteemed level. Chipper Jones, who had 395 home runs through May 4, will soon become the 43rd major leaguer with 400 homers.

These achievements would seem to virtually seal the deal for Smoltz and Jones to someday be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Among the 10 players with 3,000 strikeouts who have become eligible, nine already have plaques at Cooperstown. Only Bert Blyleven has yet to make it. The 400-homer club has 28 Hall of Fame-eligible players. All but five – former Brave Darrell Evans, Andre Dawson, Dave Kingman, Mark McGwire and Jose Canseco – have been elected.

Smoltz and Jones have qualities and achievements that set them apart, even when matched against the other great players in these two groups.

During an era when star players frequently change uniforms, Smoltz and Jones have both spent their entire careers with the Braves. Among the other 15 members of the 3,000-strikeout club, only Bob Gibson (St. Louis Cardinals) and Walter Johnson (Washington Senators) played exclusively for one team.

This is more common among the 400-homer club, where Jones will join 11 other greats who reached that level with one team: Mike Schmidt, Mickey Mantle, Ted Williams, Ernie Banks, Mel Ott, Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial, Willie Stargell, Carl Yastrzemski, Jeff Bagwell and Cal Ripken Jr.

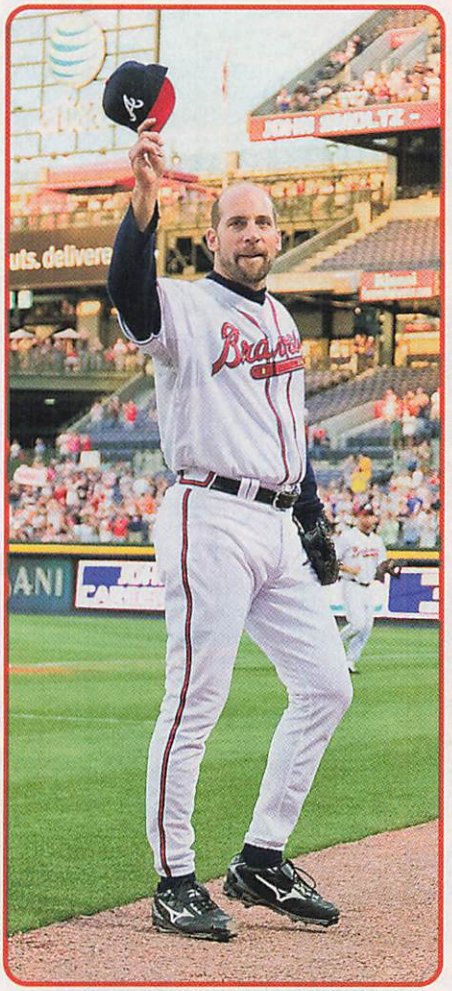
The 3,000-strikeout club may not have another new member for a long time, which makes Smoltz's achievement even more impressive. None of the active pitchers with strikeout totals over 2,000 seem likely to join him. Mike Mussina, next in line with 2,675, is 39 years old and has faded the past two years. Tom Glavine, with 2,578 at age 42, seems like a very long shot. At 45 years old, Jamie Moyer has no chance (2,137).

Smoltz stands alone among 3,000-K pitchers in one respect: None contributed nearly as much in a relief role. The righthander notched 154 saves from 2001-04 and may still add to that. Walter Johnson ranks a distant second with 34 saves. None of the pitchers approached Smoltz's 241 relief appearances. Hall of Famer Phil Niekro came closest with 148.

Partly because he recorded so many strikeouts in relief (280), Smoltz has made the third-fewest starts of any 3,000-strikeout pitcher (466). That trails only Pedro Martinez (381) and Curt Schilling (436).

Some pitchers, such as former Brave Greg Maddux, reached the 3,000 plateau mainly through longevity. Smoltz, on the other hand, has struck out the sixth-highest percentage of batters among all these great pitchers.

When Smoltz struck out the Nationals' Felipe Lopez April 22 for his 3,000, his achievement had some unusual symmetry. At that moment, he had exactly 1,500 strikeouts at home and 1,500 on the road. He also had the same career ERA figure (3.25) in both home and road games.



PAUL ABELL

John Smoltz acknowledges the Turner Field crowd and hugs Brian McCann after recording his 3,000th strikeout April 22.

PAUL ABELL

3,000 STRIKEOUT CLUB

RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF BATTERS STRUCK OUT

PITCHER	SO	BATTERS FACED	PCT.
RANDY JOHNSON	4,638	15,972	29.0
PEDRO MARTINEZ	3,031	10,726	28.3
NOLAN RYAN	5,714	22,575	25.3
CURT SCHILLING	3,116	13,284	23.5
ROGER CLEMENS	4,672	20,240	23.1
JOHN SMOLTZ	**3,011**	**13,921**	**21.6**
BOB GIBSON	3,117	16,068	19.4
STEVE CARLTON	4,136	21,683	19.1
TOM SEAVER	3,640	19,369	18.8
BERT BLYLEVEN	3,701	20,491	18.1
FERGUSON JENKINS	3,192	18,400	17.3
GREG MADDUX	3,298	19,802	16.7
DON SUTTON	3,574	21,631	16.5
GAYLORD PERRY	3,534	21,953	16.1
WALTER JOHNSON	3,509	23,749	14.8
PHIL NIEKRO	3,342	22,677	14.7

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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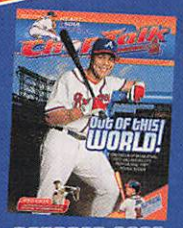

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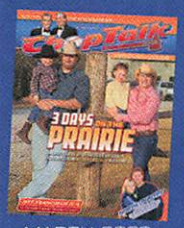
NOVEMBER 2005
BRIAN McCANN

DECEMBER 2005
ANDRUW JONES

JANUARY 2006
EDGAR RENTERIA

FEBRUARY 2006
NIEKRO, AARON, LEMASTER



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CHRIS REITSMA

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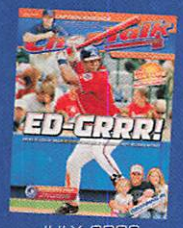

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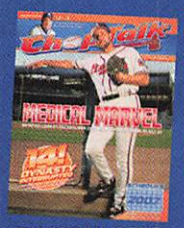

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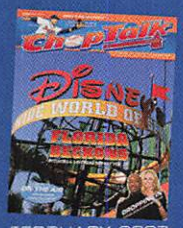

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RENTERIA

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MARK TEIXEIRA

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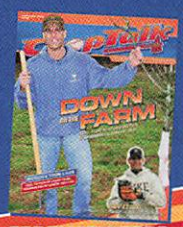

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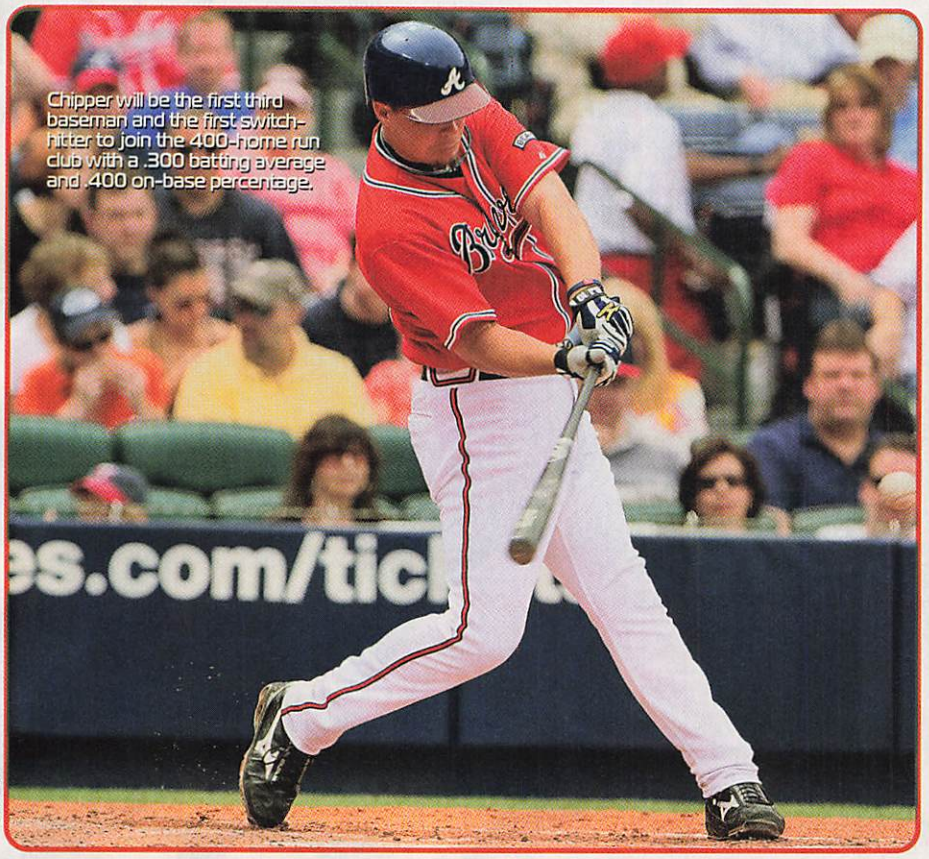


Chipper will be the first third baseman and the first switch-hitter to join the 400-home run club with a .300 batting average and .400 on-base percentage.

PAUL ABELL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Compared to nearly all the other 3,000-K pitchers, Smoltz has fewer big-win seasons. He's tied with Blyleven and Don Sutton for the fewest 20-win years with one. Smoltz made that one season memorable: He was 24-8 when he won the 1996 NL Cy Young Award.

Smoltz is the first pitcher to undergo Tommy John surgery (in 2000) and post 3,000 strikeouts. The next closest is Tommy John himself, who recorded 2,245 career K's.

Jones also will stand out in many ways among 400-home run hitters. He will become just the third switch-hitter to reach the 400 mark, after Mantle (536) and Eddie Murray (504). Don't expect any others to match his feat for a while: Lance Berkman comes next among active switch-hitters with 267 homers.

Jones will join Hank Aaron (733) and Eddie Mathews (493) as the only players to hit at least 400 home runs for the Braves franchise. He also becomes just the fourth third baseman with 400 homers. Schmidt (548), Mathews (512) and Evans (414) are the others.

Always a very selective power hitter, Jones makes better contact than most of the 400-home run hitters who have played recently. He had drawn 1,162 career walks (through May 1), compared to 1,091 strikeouts. While 14 of the 400-homer club members had more walks than strikeouts, most played back when this was far more common. Among players from the same era, only Rafael Palmeiro, Frank Thomas, Barry Bonds and Gary Sheffield joined Jones with more walks than strikeouts.

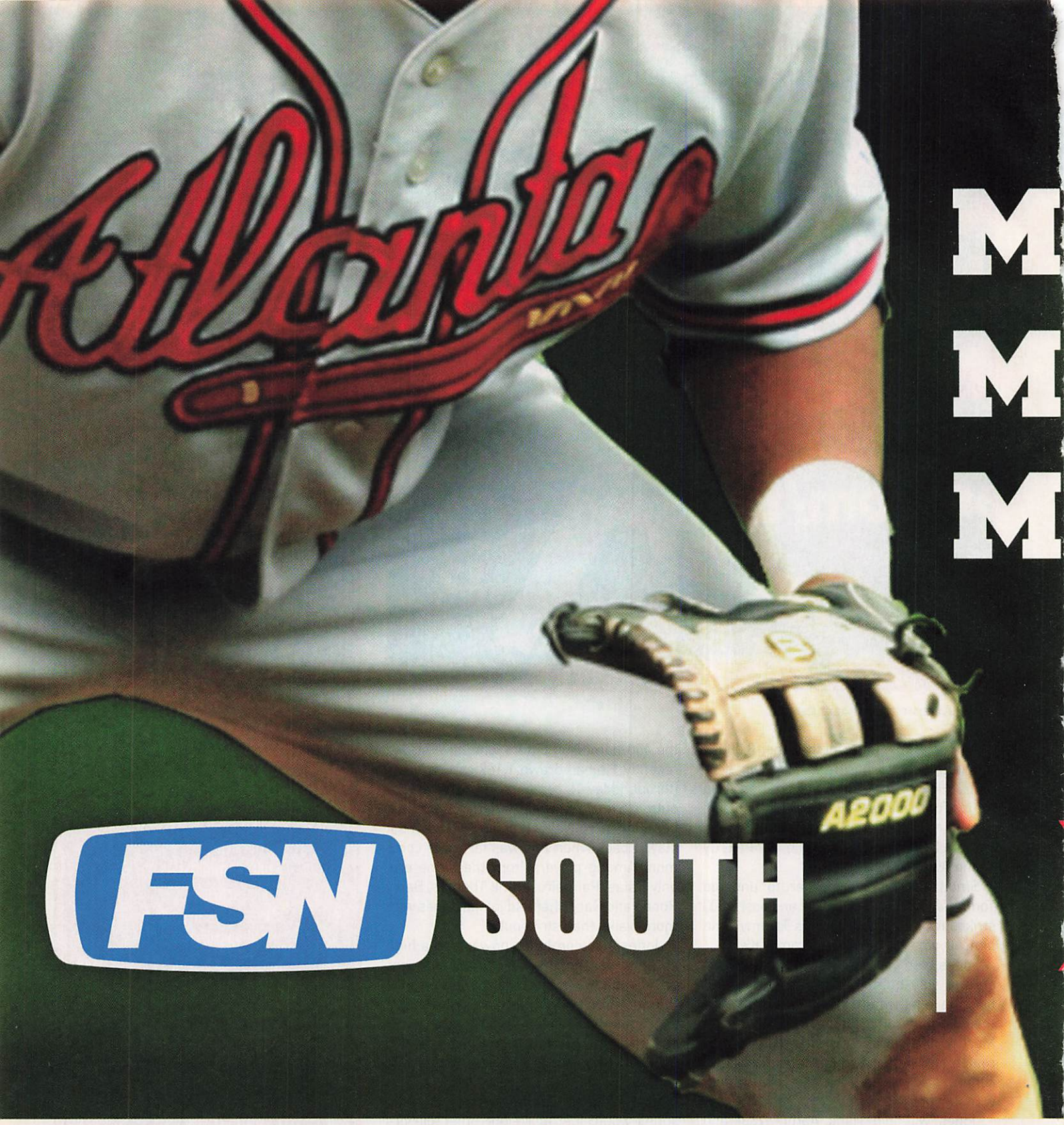
Jones also combines power and a high batting average like few great sluggers have done. Twelve current members of the 400-home run club have .300 career averages like Jones, who had a .309 career figure. Another 12 players had .400 on-base percentages. Jones had a .405 career figure.

Assuming he sustains these levels, Jones would join just eight other players that have 400 home runs, .300 batting averages, and a .400 on-base percentage. Six of the game's greatest legends – Babe Ruth, Jimmie Foxx, Ted Williams, Ott, Musial and Gehrig are on this elite list with active sluggers Manny Ramirez and Thomas. Jones will become that group's first switch-hitter, first Brave, and first third baseman!

400-HOME RUN CLUB
CHIPPER'S CLOSING IN

1	BARRY BONDS	762
2	HANK AARON	755
3	BABE RUTH	714
4	WILLIE MAYS	660
5	SAMMY SOSA	609
6	**KEN GRIFFEY JR.**	597
7	FRANK ROBINSON	586
8	MARK MCGWIRE	583
9	HARMON KILLEBREW	573
10	RAFAEL PALMEIRO	569
11	REGGIE JACKSON	563
12	MIKE SCHMIDT	548
13	MICKEY MANTLE	536
14	JIMMIE FOXX	534
15	**ALEX RODRIGUEZ**	522
16	WILLIE MCCOVEY	521
16	TED WILLIAMS	521
18	**FRANK THOMAS**	516
19	JIM THOME	513
20	ERNIE BANKS	512
20	EDDIE MATHEWS	512
22	MEL OTT	511
23	EDDIE MURRAY	504
24	**MANNY RAMIREZ**	497
25	LOU GEHRIG	493
25	FRED MCGRIFF	493
27	**GARY SHEFFIELD**	482
28	STAN MUSIAL	475
28	WILLIE STARGELL	475
30	DAVE WINFIELD	465
31	JOSE CANSECO	462
32	CARL YASTRZEMSKI	452
33	JEFF BAGWELL	449
34	DAVE KINGMAN	442
35	ANDRE DAWSON	438
36	**CARLOS DELGADO**	435
36	JUAN GONZALEZ	434
38	CAL RIPKEN JR.	431
39	MIKE PIAZZA	427
40	BILLY WILLIAMS	426
41	DARRELL EVANS	414
42	DUKE SNIDER	407
47	**CHIPPER JONES**	396

STATISTICS THROUGH MAY 6; BOLD INDICATES ACTIVE PLAYERS



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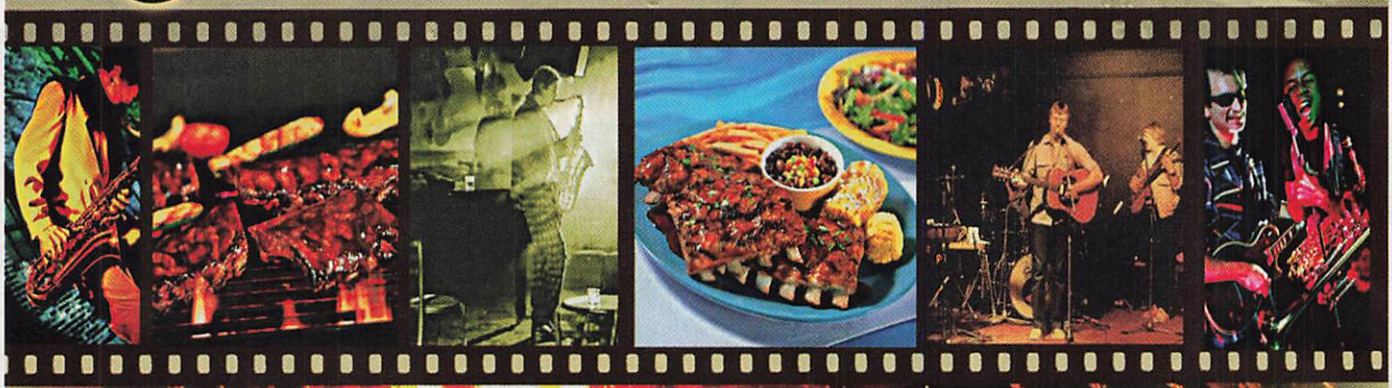

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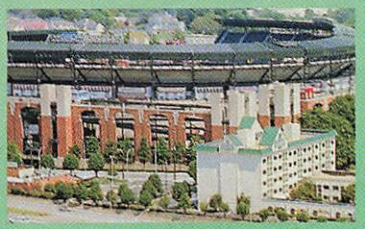

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The first pitcher from Curacao to reach the major leagues, Jurrjens allowed just 37 hits in his first 49 innings as a Brave.

REMARKABLE Rookie

WHY JAIR JURRJENS' FORMULA FOR SUCCESS DEFIES HIS YOUTHFUL AGE OF 22

BY JON COOPER

IT WAS THE KIND OF SITUATION that could cause a veteran to melt down, never mind a 22-year-old rookie.

Facing the division rival Mets at hostile Shea Stadium, Jair Jurrjens walked four consecutive hitters with 24 pitches and single-handedly turned a 1-0 lead with two outs and nobody on into a 3-1 deficit with the bases loaded. All without a ball being put in play.

But instead of losing his cool, Jurrjens coolly silenced the frenzied crowd and slammed the door, zipping a 2-2 pitch past Angel Pagan for strike three, ending the inning without any further damage.

The Braves came back and won the game, 6-3, sparked by the impressive staying power of Jurrjens, who pitched three more innings and didn't allow another baserunner.

"After the first two walks, I just tried to calm down and throw a strike to see if they could hit the ball somewhere and get an out," recalled Jurrjens, who carried the consecutive batters retired streak into his next start, when he got the first nine Nationals he faced for a streak of 19 consecutive hitters retired. "Lucky enough, I struck [Pagan] out, and the last three innings I went 1-2-3. It was crazy."

That wild game shows just how far Jurrjens has come in learning to handle adversity. The Willemstad, Curacao, native, who grew up watching, and even serving as batboy on the youth league team that his older brother, Carl, and former Braves centerfielder Andruw Jones played on, admits that wasn't always the case.

"If somebody made a mistake or I made a mistake, I went a little bit crazy," he said sheepishly. "My dad would say, just keep your poise and concentrate and get your team back to the dugout as soon as possible. Lucky enough, I got it. When I was a kid, I used to be worse."

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

Jurrjens, who was acquired by the Braves on Oct. 29 from Detroit with outfielder Gorkys Hernandez for shortstop Edgar Renteria, may need to clarify to some that he is no longer a kid. However, such an explanation isn't necessary inside the Braves clubhouse.

"He's 22 years old, and you'd never know that by carrying on a conversation with him, watching his mound presence, stuff like that," said Brian McCann. "Nothing really bothers him. To be successful at this level, you have to have that."

"He's got great stuff and he has great composure," agreed Tom Glavine, whose professional career began when Jurrjens was a little more than 1 1/2 years old. "For a young kid to be able to combine those two things at a young age and with very little experience, that's pretty impressive. He's fun to watch."

He was so much fun to watch that a scout who saw him pitch back home in Curacao, convinced him to make a permanent move to the mound.

"I used to be an infielder," recalled Jurrjens, who went 3-1 in seven starts with Detroit last season and became the first Curacao native to pitch in the majors. "I used to pitch, but just when they needed somebody to pitch.

"One day when I was 16, somehow I threw 89 [miles per hour]," he continued. "So from nowhere, this scout went crazy and told my dad, 'Just tell him to stop playing infield and sign as a pitcher.' Suddenly, I signed as a pitcher."

Getting to pitch for the Braves is icing on the cake.

"Growing up watching Tom [Glavine] and 'Smoltzie' pitch, then seeing [Tim] Hudson come up with Oakland, it's an honor just to be in the same group with them," said Jurrjens, whose father, Carl, is a longtime Braves fan, dating back to the days of Hank Aaron in Milwaukee.

Jurrjens came into spring training as a candidate for the fifth spot in the rotation, but quickly showed he belongs in the company of the veterans. After his May 6 start against San Diego, Jurrjens was tied with Hudson for the team lead in wins (four), and quality starts (five), and led in innings (44 1/3). His .206 opponents' batting average (.190 vs. righties, .221 vs. lefties) was tops among Braves starters, and he was the only Brave to pitch into the sixth inning in every start (until May 12 at Pittsburgh).

Not surprisingly, he was in the top three among major league rookies in nearly every significant pitching category, including wins, starts, quality starts, innings, ERA and strikeouts.

"He probably wasn't going to be on most people's radar screens when we traded for him," raved John Smoltz, who, like Jurrjens, came from Detroit as a prospect in return for a veteran (in August 1987 for Doyle Alexander). "He's been a mainstay and probably one of the best pitchers, along with Huddy and Glavine, through the year. I've been totally impressed from when I saw him in spring training."

Jurrjens impressed Braves' scouts long before they traded for him.

"Our scouts were very high on him," said GM Frank Wren. "We had a number of scouts see him and like what they'd seen - not over just this past year, but the past several years."

Wren added that ever since the trade to Atlanta, Jurrjens has remained in demand.

"Every time, whether it was the General Managers Meetings or the Winter Meetings, when we would have trade discussions with other teams, one of the first names they would bring up was Jair," said Wren. "I've since talked with a lot of general managers who had interest in him like we did."

Jurrjens cruised through the Tigers' farm system, spending two seasons in the Gulf Coast League, then dominating the Midwest League (A) in 2005, going 12-6 with a 3.41 ERA in 26 starts and a 3:1 strikeouts-to-walks ratio (108-36).

After a blazing 5-0 start to 2006 for Lakeland (A), Jurrjens was promoted to Double-A, Erie, where he finished 4-3, with a 3.36 ERA.

Last season, after a 7-5 start with a 3.20 ERA in 19 starts, he made the jump to the majors, making his debut on Aug. 15 at Cleveland. He lost that night but pitched well (four runs in seven innings), and would avenge that loss a week later, beating the Indians by allowing just one run and one hit in 6 2/3 innings.

Jurrjens won three of his first four starts, a stretch interrupted by

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PAUL ABELL

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

REDS, GRIFFEY TALKING ABOUT POSSIBLE TRADE

REDS GENERAL MANAGER Walt Jocketty recently asked rightfielder **Ken Griffey Jr.** if he wanted to be traded, according to a major-league source. Griffey replied that his preference was to stay in Cincinnati and try to turn around the Reds' season. But, he added, if the front office wanted to change direction, he would consider a deal. Griffey enjoys full no-trade protection, essentially giving him the right to choose his next team. However, he would not necessarily require a team to exercise his $16.5 million option for 2009 as a condition of a deal.

AB

Look for the Phillies to make a more concerted effort to sign closer **Brad Lidge** to a contract extension than leftfielder **Pat Burrell**. The reason: Free-agent hitters are easier to attract to hitter-friendly Citizens Bank Park than pitchers. The Phillies need Burrell as a right-handed hitting complement to **Chase Utley** and **Ryan Howard**, but outfielders generally are in plentiful supply. If Burrell left as a free agent, the Phillies could replace him through free agency or a trade. The departure of Lidge would create a greater void.

AB

Barry Bonds to the Tigers? Former Brave **Gary Sheffield** says he wouldn't object, and it's not as if the team can turn back after building a $137.6 million payroll, the third highest in the game. **Jim Leyland** knows Bonds well from their years together in Pittsburgh and is comfortable managing him. Not to mention the struggling Tigers badly need left-handed power, and the team's clubhouse already is full of star players with big egos. "It's already a zoo," one Tiger said. "What's another hippopotamus?"

AB

The Cardinals' weak spot appears to be closer **Jason Isringhausen**, who blew four saves in a 15-day span. The good news is that relief pitching is the strength of the Cardinals' farm system. **Chris Perez**, the team's first pick in the 2006 draft, is being groomed as a closer at Triple A. **Jason Motte**, a converted catcher, is another hard thrower with late-inning potential.

AB

Trying to figure out why Indians lefthander **Cliff Lee** has been so successful? His velocity has increased from 88-89 mph to 91-92, and unlike teammates **C.C. Sabathia** and **Fausto Carmona**, he did not pitch deep into the playoffs last season. Lee worked a mere 145 1/3 innings after missing the first month of 2007 with a right abdominal strain, so his arm is relatively fresh. He clearly is pitching with heightened confidence, but lest anyone forget, he was 18-5 with a 3.79 ERA in 2005 and a 14-game winner in both '04 and '06.

AB

Something to ponder about Dodgers shortstop and former Brave **Rafael Furcal**, who is eligible for free agency after this season: He averaged 14 homers per year from 2003 to '06 and probably could hit even more. "In some ways, he's like Ichiro," one scout said. "He can really drive a ball if he changes his approach. Actually, he could drive the ball more frequently and even further than Ichiro could."

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

a stint on the disabled list due to shoulder inflammation, before stumbling a little in his final two starts.

There's been no stumble in 2008.

His winning formula is simple. It begins by mercilessly pounding the strike zone, something he says he learned by watching his brother.

"He's very aggressive in the strike zone," said pitching coach Roger McDowell. "When you get ahead of the hitters and you show the other club that you're going to come at them in the strike zone with quality pitches, it puts the other team's offense in a little bit of a defensive position, where they know the guy's not going to fool around and throw strikes right off the bat."

"It's something that I've always had," said Jurrjens, who through seven starts had thrown 63 percent of his pitches for strikes (436 out of 691). "I was lucky enough to learn it back home and come here and keep making my adjustments and get better at throwing strikes."

There's no doubt that Jurrjens is feeling at home in Atlanta.

The BATTLE of CURACAO

JUST BECAUSE Jair Jurrjens wasn't a Brave prior to this season didn't mean there weren't special emotions attached to facing fellow Curacao native Andruw Jones for the first time.

Thus, April 20 at Turner Field was a very special day for the rookie righthander. It would become even more special with two out in the first inning, when Jurrjens struck out the former Braves centerfielder.

"The first AB, I was trying not to look at him because I knew I was going to be smiling. He's always smiling, and I knew it was going to be something funny," recalled Jurrjens, who once was a 6-year-old batboy on the youth league team that Andruw and Jurrjens' brother, Carl, played on. "I tried to look away until he got into the box."

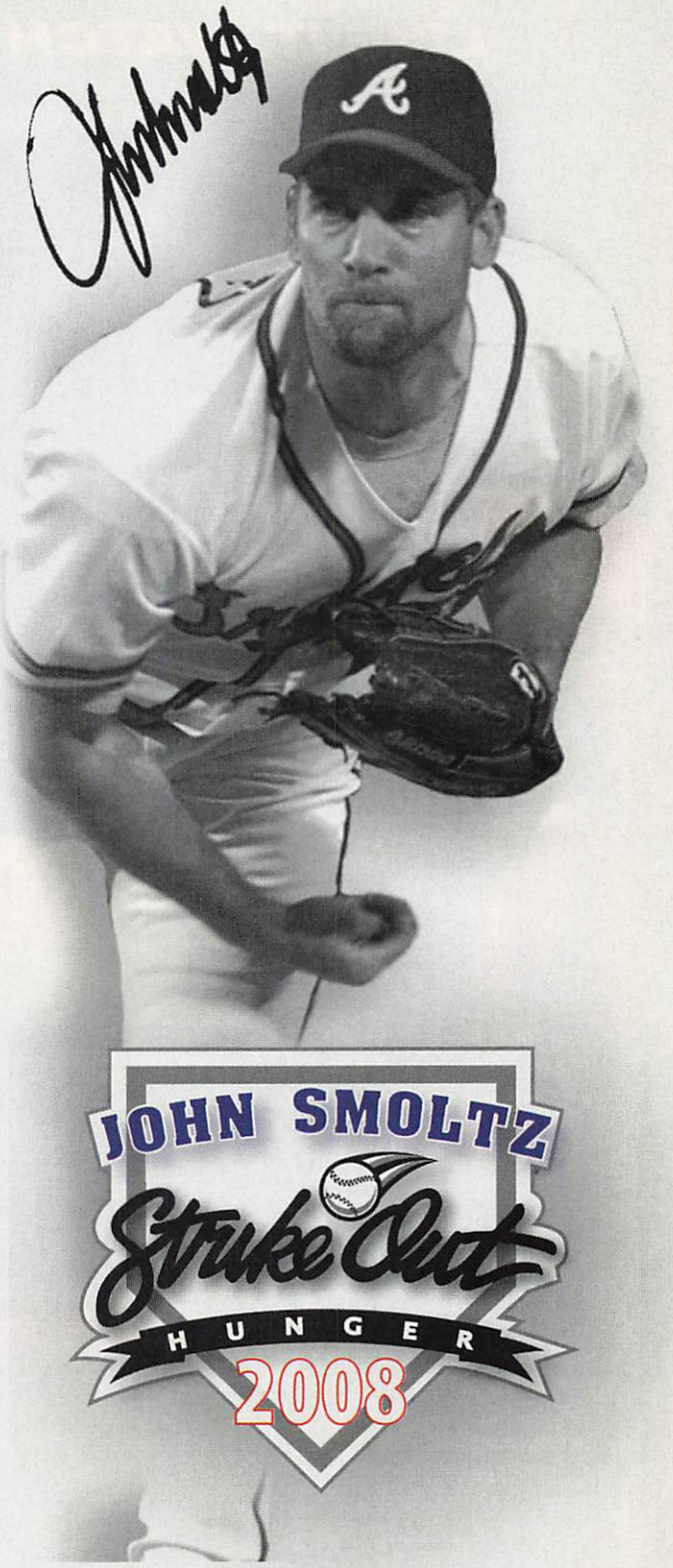
Jurrjens struck out his countryman all three times he faced him in the game and beat the Dodgers, 6-1.

"I've been playing pro ball for six years, and I've never played with somebody from back home before," he added. "I didn't really think about it so much, but it would be awesome to play on the same team."

Jurrjens did play with Andruw on the Netherlands entry in the inaugural World Baseball Classic in 2006.

- JON COOPER

Strike Out Hunger!



SEND IN YOUR DONATION TODAY.

Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating $200 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

Yes!

I will pledge $_____

Signed Gear		Total
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Baseball	$ 150 ___	$___
Official Bat	$ 400 ___	$___
Official Glove	$ 500 ___	$___
Official Smoltz Braves Jersey	$1000___	$___
All items are	$2150___	$___

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City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone:_____

The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game.
All items based on availability and will be sent to you at the close of the Braves season and upon receipt of payment.

For more information call 404-892-FEED ext.1246. Or visit ACFB.org
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BACK TO THE FUTURE

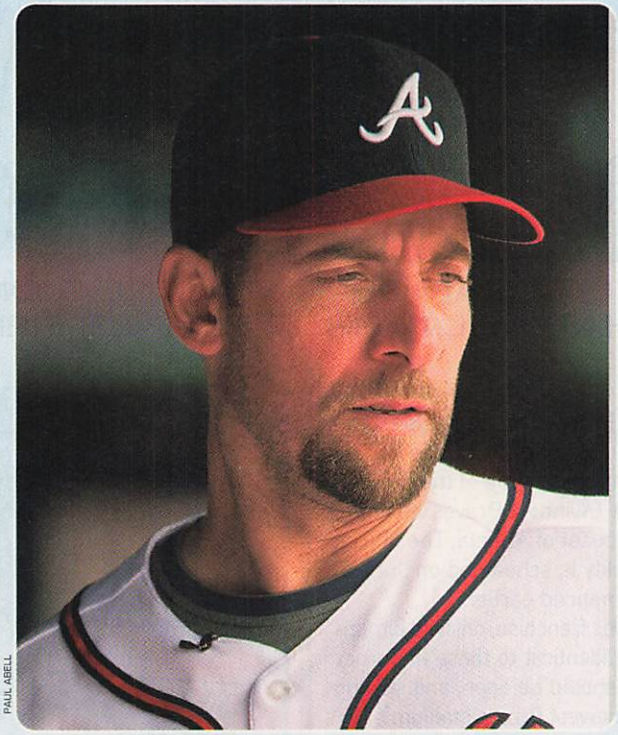
SHOULDER FORCES SMOLTZ TO RECREATE HIS CELEBRATED ROLE AS CLOSER

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

When John Smoltz revealed in late April that he planned to return from the disabled list as a reliever, there were obviously some surprised individuals. Lost in the revelation was the fact that he made this decision knowing that it could lead to this being his final season with the Braves.

Smoltz's contract includes a $12 million option for next year that will be vested if he reaches 200 innings this season. Given the current state of his fragile right shoulder, the 41-year-old righthander knows he likely wouldn't have been able to pitch that many innings, even if he had remained in the starter's role.

Additionally, the amount of discomfort Smoltz has battled this year has led him to realize that he might not be able to pitch next year anyway. But for now, he believes he can still contribute if given the chance to pitch one inning at a time.



PAUL ABELL

"I'm not fighting it," Smoltz said. "I've got every reason, contractually, to think [differently]. If I pitch 200 more innings, I have another year. That's not going to happen. There isn't any magic that's going to make that happen."

Obviously, there's always a chance that Smoltz could find health in the relief role and choose to return to the Braves next season. But he knows that he's nearing the end of a 20-season major league career that has been played solely in Atlanta.

"I'm completely at peace with where I'm at," Smoltz said. "If tomorrow, a fortune-teller told me I wasn't going to pitch again, I'd be fine with it. If they told me I was going to pitch another few years, that would be great."

While retirement could clearly be an option at the end of this season, Smoltz is currently only worried about finding a way to make an impact this season. This is what led him to decide it would be best for him to return to the relief role that he handled from 2001-04, after coming back from Tommy John elbow ligament replacement surgery.

"With every bit of the information that we have, this seems to be the best avenue," said Smoltz, who notched a franchise-record 154 saves while serving as the Braves' closer. "I hear people say that we can't win without me as a starter. But we're not going to win with me as a five-inning starter either."

Though he allowed just two runs in the 23 innings he compiled over his first four starts this season, Smoltz was battling discomfort in his shoulder region.

"Even during those first four starts, I haven't been happy at all," he said. "I've been in a lot of pain. ... People say that I was lights out in those other starts. I was lights out for three innings and then gutted myself through the rest of those games."

He was able to make the necessary adjustments until April 27, when he allowed the Mets four earned runs in just four innings.

Two days later, noted surgeon Dr. James Andrews diagnosed Smoltz with a severely inflamed biceps tendon and inflamed rotator cuff. He went on the disabled list April 29.

Now, Smoltz will likely wait until late May before trying to pitch again. Once the inflammation in his shoulder has subsided, he'll probably begin a short minor league rehab assignment and then return to a role in the bullpen.

Smoltz hasn't used the word "closer," though Bobby Cox has (see page 17). Before moving into the closer's role in 2001, he spent a few weeks as a middle reliever. Based on how he feels and the state of the Braves' bullpen at that time, he may do the same this year.

"Based on what I can do and what I have done in the past, this is the best-case scenario for us," Smoltz said.

While Smoltz was serving as the closer, he always longed to return to a starting role. Now, with the realization that his body may never allow him to be a reliable top-flight starter again, he wants to remain a valuable contributor, and is hopeful that he'll be able to fill this role out of the bullpen.

"It might not work, but I'm fired up about the challenge," Smoltz said.

The latest twist in Smoltz's career intrigues Tom Glavine, too.

"It's hard to doubt him if he feels that's all he can do physically to help the team," said Glavine. "I don't think any of us are going to be complaining if he comes out of that bullpen with us having a one-run lead."

Fans will enter the new Gwinnett stadium (above) at the concourse level and descend into the seating bowl (below).

CARBON COPY

GWINNETT TO BREAK GROUND JUNE 3 ON BALLPARK THAT WILL MIRROR TURNER FIELD

BY CAROL CARTER

ON OPENING DAY 2009, three Braves playing fields will be ready for action in Georgia – Turner Field, of course; State Mutual Stadium, 70 miles northwest of Atlanta and home of the Class-A Rome Braves; and the new Triple-A Gwinnett Braves stadium, that will be located just 36 miles northeast of Atlanta. The official groundbreaking for the Gwinnett facility is scheduled on June 3, though grading and other work commenced earlier.

Significantly for players and the Braves franchise, on-field dimensions at the Gwinnett stadium will be identical to those at Turner Field. Important to fans, a restaurant should be open, and seating will be close to the playing field at the newest Braves stadium.

As previously reported, the Braves' Triple-A affiliate will be relocated next season from Richmond, Va., to Gwinnett County, Ga., and a into brand new, $45-million stadium being built between Rock Springs Road and Old Peachtree Road, south of Interstate 85.

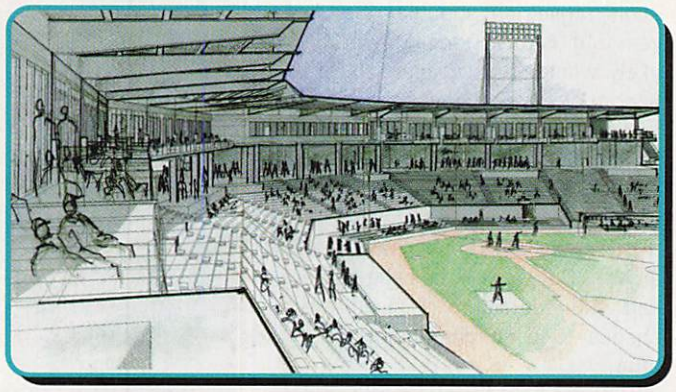
The Braves were adamant, says Mark Hults, project manager in the Atlanta office of HKS Inc., the architectural firm that is designing the new stadium, "that everything inside that field be exactly like Turner Field – the warning track, distance from home plate to the wall and to left, right and center. When they call up a player - one of those outfielders - and put him out there, he'll know exactly how many strides he's got before he hits the wall.

"It's a thoughtful, purposeful decision," Hults said. "And also, if somebody is injured and needs to be sent down for a few weeks, he'll come out to this stadium and be very comfortable in the respect that everything is the same."

Atlanta real estate developer R. Brand Morgan, who sold the land for the stadium to the county, will develop the land around the stadium and a restaurant or two inside the facility.

"I think that on Opening Day next year, we will have 25,000 to 30,000 square feet of restaurant space open," said Morgan, CEO of Brand Properties.

Fans entering the new stadium will walk in at the concourse level, then descend into the seating bowl. Or, if they like, Hults says, they can walk the entire concourse and watch the game the whole time, because the 360-degree walk is open to the field.


HKS INC.

Approximately 7,500 fans can sit in traditional stadium seats, while another 2,500 (give or take) can opt to spread a blanket on a grassy slope in the outfield. Those with children can watch the kids play in a special area to be built just behind the batter's eye, the darkened surface at the center field fence that helps batters block out distractions. Lawn seating will be to the right and left of the play area.

Inside the stadium, fans will see a canopy that provides shade over a portion of the seats and extends out over the entry plaza. Outside, Hults says, "The image of the stadium and its glass openings and the rhythm of the columns is going to feel sort of warehouse-like."

The design evolved from an HKS research team visiting the different communities of Gwinnett County.

"It was more to get a feel for what is important to the community and the county from an historical perspective," Hults said. "All of those things started to influence design decisions."

The fan experience, he says, will be an intimate one: "We have pulled the playing field as tightly into the seating bowl as we can."

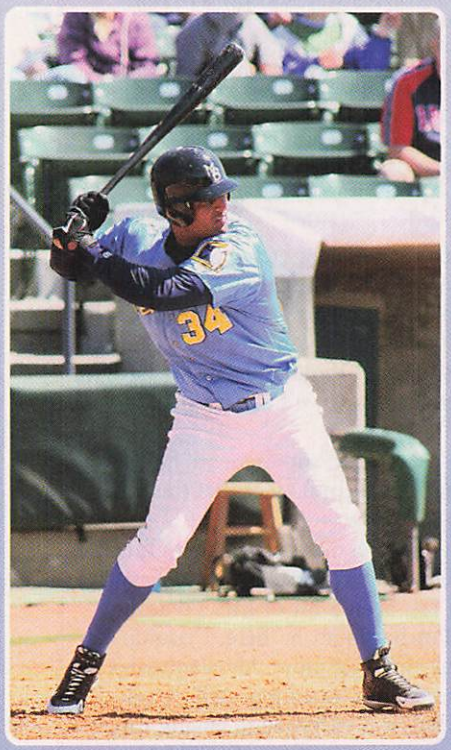
MEJIA'S HARD WORK PAYING OFF WITH HOT STREAK FOR PELICANS

MYRTLE BEACH first baseman Ernesto Mejia is a classic example that hard work pays off in baseball. After getting off to a .193 start through April 25, the big Venezuelan is emerging as a key ingredient in the middle of the Pelicans' lineup.

Mejia was named the Carolina League Player of the Week for April 28-May 4 when he batted .483 (14-for-29) with three home runs, six doubles, a triple and 11 RBIs. Six of those RBIs came May 3 when he matched the franchise single game record.

Through Mother's Day (May 11), Mejia had extended his hitting streak to 13 games, increasing his batting average to .270 by going 21-for-54 (.389). He also opened the month of May with at least one double in eight straight games, which contributed mightily to 19 of his first 37 hits going for extra bases.

"Ernesto and (hitting coach) Rick Albert have been working hard almost every day in the cage," said Pelicans manager Rocket Wheeler. "He's doing a much better job of staying back on pitches and going with pitches by taking them to the opposite field. You can tell some things are starting to click with him, and it's a fun thing to watch."



MYRTLE BEACH PELICANS

The 6-6, 190-pound Ernesto Mejia earned Carolina League Player of the Week honors for hitting .483 (14-for-29) from April 28-May 4.

The Braves signed Mejia as a 16-year-old out of Guanare, Venezuela, in 2002. He spent two summers playing in the Dominican Republic before advancing to the Gulf Coast League in 2005 and the Appalachian League in 2006. An outfielder during the early part of his career, he spent most of his time at first base last year. That coincided with his making steady strides at the plate, including a combined .321 average with a career-best nine home runs and 48 RBIs between stops at rookie-level Danville and Class-A Rome.

Mejia's production tends to come in bunches. In one eight-game stretch, he had two games with three RBIs and the six-RBI game. Wheeler believes that output is simply a sign of things to come.

"He can hit the ball a long ways," Wheeler said. "But what I like is the fact he's just trying to make solid contact. Everything looks to be coming together for him, and he could have an impact in the organization."

RICHMOND
TRIPLE A

DIORY HERNANDEZ was promoted to the R-Braves on April 26 when **Brent Lillibridge** received his first taste of the big leagues. Hernandez played shortstop his first seven games before shifting to second base when Lillibridge returned to Richmond. After batting .286 in 22 games at Mississippi, Hernandez hit safely in his first 12 games at the Triple-A level, going 21-for-45 for a .467 average, and led the farm system with a .328 average through May 11...

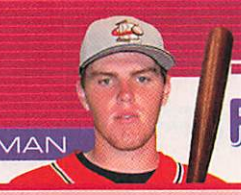
Charlie Morton continues to impress and could contribute in Atlanta before the All-Star break. Morton has parlayed a strong showing in the Arizona Fall League into an outstanding start at Richmond. Manager **Dave Brundage** said in early May that Morton was "major league ready," yet could use another six weeks in the minors in order to fine-tune his fastball location and build more confidence. The righthander allowed one earned run or less in five of his first seven outings and gave up only 25 hits in his initial 41 innings...

Scott Thorman played third base on May 7 for the first time since 2000, his first season in the Atlanta organization. Thorman handled two grounders flawlessly before shifting to first base in the eighth inning. The Braves are looking to expand his defensive options. He's played left field with both Richmond and Atlanta, in addition to his normal spot at first base. The change of scenery has coincided with a resurgence at the plate. After hitting .176 with seven RBIs in April, Thorman posted a .394 average with a home run and nine RBIs during the first 10 days of May...

Outfielder **Brandon Jones** did not hit his first home run this season until May 10 and had only nine extra-base hits (eight doubles and the homer) with 13 RBIs in his first 121 at-bats...

Josh Anderson continues to be an important ingredient to Richmond's early success. He had the game-winning hit in back-to-back games, May 4-5, and has done an excellent job at the top of the lineup while leading the International League

FREDDY FREEMAN



MAKING ADJUSTMENTS IS THE BIG CHALLENGE

EDITOR'S NOTE

Left-handed-hitting first baseman Freddy Freeman, 18, was considered to be a two-way prospect (also a right-handed pitcher) when the Braves drafted him in the second round last June. The 6-5, 220-pound Orange, Calif., native hit .268 with six home runs and 30 RBIs in 59 Gulf Coast League games last year before being assigned to Class-A Rome to open this season.

THIS IS MY FIRST full season, and I feel like I've gotten off to a decent start. I'm really not worrying about what I'm doing. Instead, I'm trying to do what the team needs since we've been struggling a little bit lately.

We haven't been able to string hits together, because some days guys come to the field playing well while others are having off days. We haven't had that stretch where everyone is clicking at the same time, but I can see it coming. Once that happens, I think all of us will be feeling a lot better about how things are going.

I know a lot of people point to the fact that we are a young team. It's true that we are young, but we are mature for our ages. With the talent we have on this team, we should not be playing as poorly as we have at times this year.

We're still getting used to playing with each other, and there are indications that things are coming together. I have total confidence that this will be a good season for us when it's all said and done.

> "THE TOUGHEST PART IS PLAYING ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM WHERE I GREW UP IN CALIFORNIA."

Going through my first spring training and reporting to Rome in April, everything has been a lot of fun. I'll admit that I'm happy to be here. I couldn't ask for anything more. My teammates are great, our coaching staff is outstanding, and everyone is having fun. So far, this is everything I could have hoped for in pro ball.

The toughest part is playing all the way across the country from where I grew up in California. I've been a little homesick here and there, but my dad is coming to town later this month. Plus, the guys on this team have become good friends, and that definitely makes for a great situation.

My dream has always been to play in the major leagues. Ever since I started in t-ball, I've loved playing the game. It's a dream come true to be able to take the field every day and do something that I absolutely love.

Of course, I want to keep making progress and climb my way to the top, but this part of the journey is a great experience. There are tough days, like the long bus rides and getting in at two in the morning before having to play a game at noon the next day. But it's all worth it to be able to do this for a living.

The toughest part so far has been learning how the pitchers work. If I get a hit off a fastball in my first at-bat, I can expect to see sliders early the next time I come up to the plate.

The mental part of the game is huge. Even though you fail much of the time, you have to stay up and realize the adjustments you need to make. There will be ups and downs, but you have to stay strong and work your way through it.

Some teams were interested in me as a pitcher, and I miss taking the mound here and there. Pitching is fun, but I realize I'm a hitter now. I love stepping into the box and taking my cuts. The Braves are an amazing organization.

in stolen bases. Anderson, who was acquired in the off-season from the Astros, played 21 games with Houston late last season and has a five-mile stretch of Highway 452 in Pulaski County, Ky., named after him for becoming the first resident from the small community to reach the majors...

Barbaro Canizares led the R-Braves in hitting during the early going, batting .322-4-19 through 33 games. However, he is a mediocre first baseman. A promotion to the major leagues would likely come as a designated hitter with an American League club...

The Braves signed veteran **Scott Williamson** on April 25. The 32-year-old Williamson, who was released in spring training by San Francisco, has pitched in 344 major league games during his career, with the majority of those outings coming with Cincinnati. The righthander has battled a multitude of injuries in recent seasons.

MISSISSIPPI
DOUBLE A

MANAGER Phillip Wellman rarely hides his emotions, and that was the case following a loss on April 30 when the M-Braves let a seven-run lead evaporate. During a stern post-game speech in the clubhouse, Wellman informed his players that they would participate in a 2 p.m. practice the following day in order to work on fundamentals...

The M-Braves have undergone several roster changes of late, the most notable being the promotion of righthander **Tommy Hanson** from Myrtle Beach on May 11. Hanson was overpowering the Carolina League with an 0.90 ERA at the time of his callup and surrendered only four earned runs for the Pelicans while striking out 49 and allowing only 15 hits in 40 innings...

A day earlier, the Braves signed outfielder **Reid Gorecki** and assigned him to Mississippi. Gorecki played in the St. Louis organization in 2007 and hit .237 at Double-A Springfield...

Second baseman **J.C. Holt** was demoted from Richmond on May 4 after hitting .215 in 26 games with the R-Braves. Holt, who earned Southern League All-Star honors last year, took over the leadoff duties upon arriving in Mississippi...

Matt Young responded to moving out of the leadoff spot by putting together a team-best 14-game hitting streak through May 11. Young was hitting .429 (18-for-42) during the 14 games...

Another strong addition has been leftfielder **Jason Perry,** who was signed as a free agent on April 20. Perry went a combined 5-for-6 with a home run and three RBIs in each of his first two games with Mississippi. He later put together a nine-game hitting streak and ranked among the Southern League leaders in homers and RBIs. A former player at Georgia Tech who was Toronto's sixth-round draft pick in 2002, Perry hit .268-18-58 in 78 games with Triple-A Sacramento in 2007...

Kala Ka'aihue, who struggled with the M-Braves last August after dominating at Myrtle Beach, had a difficult first month. The good news was the first baseman from Hawaii responded by hitting his first two home runs of the season in back-to-back games May 8-9. Wellman moved Ka'aihue from cleanup to the sixth spot in the lineup on May 5 in order to reduce some of the pressure...

Third baseman **Van Pope** returned from the disabled list for one day, April 19, only to return to the DL the next day when his left hamstring proved it wasn't ready... Centerfielder **Carl Loadenthal** missed nine games in late April due to a strained oblique. He returned on April 30, only to have the injury reoccur...

Pitcher **Jairo Cuevas** was placed on the disabled list April 21 with a shoulder injury. Cuevas was 0-2 with a 7.50 ERA through three starts... **Mike Rozema** announced retirement as a player on April 17.

MYRTLE BEACH
ADVANCED A

KEVIN GUNDERSON led the Carolina League by recording a save in nine of his first 10 opportunities, thanks largely to a nasty slider. The lefthander from Oregon State had 19 strikeouts in his first 16 1/3 innings while allowing only two earned runs...

Deunte Heath, who won five of his first six decisions with a 1.84 ERA, came within one pitch of a seven-inning no-hitter in the first game of a doubleheader May 13. He had two outs and two strikes in the last inning before yielding a single and settling for a one-hitter...

Tyler Flowers has struggled to gain consistency at the plate after emerging as a spring sensation with the big league club in March. Flowers owned a .236 average in his first 123 at-bats. He hit his first two home runs of the season on April 20, including a grand slam and a solo shot for five RBIs against Kinston, and added three doubles versus Lynchburg on April 29...

Shortstop **Brandon Hicks** continues to excel in all phases of the game at shortstop. The Texas A&M product has displayed solid power and committed only four errors in his first 23 games with the Pelicans...

Infielder **Robert Marcial** has adapted to his utility role. Marcial had 11 hits during a stretch of 19 at-bats in nine games with seven runs scored. He went 3-for-3 with two doubles, two RBIs and one run in a 4-3 win at Wilmington on May 10... Outfielder **Gorkys Hernandez** missed three weeks after injuring a hamstring on April 23. Hernandez was off to a great start as the Myrtle Beach leadoff hitter and ranked among the league leaders in triples and runs scored. While the injury was not considered to be serious, the Braves are being cautiousness...

The Braves announced in April that they have extended their working agreement with the Pelicans for two more years, through the 2010 season. Myrtle Beach has been with the Braves since the franchise moved from Durham, N.C., in 1999.

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ROME
CLASS A

SCOTT DIAMOND was named the South Atlantic League Pitcher of the Week on April 28 after the lefthander went 2-0 with an 0.75 ERA in two starts. Diamond, who was signed as a non-drafted free agent last August out of the college-level Coastal Plain League, allowed only one earned run in 12 innings while striking out 12. He's been Rome's most consistent pitcher this season, and improved to 3-0 in seven starts by allowing one run and five hits over seven innings at Greenville on May 7...

Jason Heyward continues to look like the steal of the 2007 draft after going 14th overall. Heyward has impressed scouts and managers at every visit thus far in the South Atlantic League, displaying excellent power and athleticism to go with a mature approach to the game. The rightfielder hit a pair of home runs on April 26, six days after he went 4-for-5 with two runs scored. Heyward batted .330-3-16 in April and showed no signs of letting up in May, including a four-game hitting streak with a home run through May 10...

Leftfielder **Cody Johnson**, Atlanta's first-round pick in 2006, had five home runs and 16 RBIs in his first 36 games, but struck out 60 times in his first 129 at-bats. By contrast, first baseman **Freddie Freeman** was hitting .308 with a farm system-best 24 RBIs and only 18 strikeouts in his first 35 games...

BILL SETLIFF

Cody Johnson, who hit 17 home runs in just 243 at-bats last year at Danville, hit five in his first 36 games this year at Rome.

After leading the Appalachian League in ERA last year, **Jose Ortegano** finally earned his first victory of the season on May 10 by limiting Greenville to one run and five hits over seven innings...

Benino Pruneda, a 5-foot-9 reliever from El Paso, Tex., struck out 21 in his first 14 1/3 innings. He entered the game against Greenville on May 10 with the bases loaded in the ninth inning and struck out all three batters he faced to record his second save...

Manager **Randy Ingle** posted the 1,000th victory of his 17-year minor league managerial career with Rome's 5-1 win over Greenville on May 7.

TOP 10 CHOPTALK PROSPECTS

1. **JASON HEYWARD,** 18, OF, ROME
2. **TOMMY HANSON,** 21, RHP, MISSISSIPPI
3. **GORKYS HERNANDEZ,** 20, OF, MYRTLE BEACH
4. **CHARLIE MORTON,** 24, RHP, RICHMOND
5. **JORDAN SCHAFER,** 21, OF, MISSISSIPPI
6. **COLE ROHRBOUGH,** 21, LHP, EXTENDED SPRING
7. **FREDDIE FREEMAN,** 18, 1B, ROME
8. **BRANDON JONES,** 24, LF, RICHMOND
9. **JOSH ANDERSON,** 25, CF, RICHMOND
10. **JULIO TEHERAN,** 17, RHP, EXTENDED SPRING

EXTENDED SPRING TRAINING

The Braves continue to be impressed with the way **Julio Teheran** is throwing. The 17-year-old righthander from Colombia has proven capable of joining a full-season club, but Atlanta officials do not want to overload him in his first year in the United States. He is expected to pitch for the Braves' Gulf Coast League entry, beginning in mid-June, although there is an outside chance he could see time at Danville in the Appalachian League...

Cole Rohrbough was on the verge of reporting to a full-season team after battling rotator cuff tendinitis since his second outing of spring training. The lefthander emerged as one of the premier pitching prospects in the organization last year and was to open the season at Myrtle Beach prior to suffering the injury...

Third baseman **Eric Campbell** remained at home through the first 10 days of May while being suspended by the organization. The Braves continue to debate whether to cut ties with the infielder or give him another chance to improve his work habits...

Jordan Schafer remains on track to return to Mississippi by June 1. He is serving a 50-game suspension from Major League Baseball for allegedly using human growth hormone. Schafer never tested positive, and he has been allowed to work out during the suspension.

BILL SETLIFF

Highly regarded Julio Teheran, 17, likely will start his pro career in the Gulf Coast League.

DRAFT NOTES

Major League Baseball announced in late April that the Braves will receive the 70th overall pick instead of the 52nd overall selection as compensation for failing to sign second-round choice **Joshua Fields** from the University of Georgia in 2007. Atlanta will have four picks among the top 100 players in the June 5-6 draft, including the 40th (compensation for losing free agent pitcher Ron Mahay), 64th and 96th overall selections. Atlanta lost its first-round pick, the 18th overall, to the Mets by signing free agent **Tom Glavine**.

FARM STATISTICS

RICHMOND 20-17

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | THE DIAMOND (804) 359-4444

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.278	36	144	18	40	5	0	1	12	8	16	12
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.286	7	14	2	4	1	0	0	0	1	3	3
Borchard, Joe (OF)	.280	26	93	12	26	4	2	3	10	11	22	2
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.322	34	121	11	39	7	0	4	19	8	18	0
Fasano, Sal (C)	.263	13	38	3	10	2	1	0	2	2	11	0
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.361	17	61	7	22	5	0	1	7	4	2	0
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.215	26	79	11	17	1	0	0	7	14	21	7
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.260	36	127	18	33	8	0	1	13	16	33	3
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.183	28	109	14	20	4	0	1	13	9	30	9
Sammons, Clint (C)	.312	26	93	9	29	7	0	1	10	11	16	2
Spiezio, Scott (INF)	.333	5	21	2	7	2	0	0	5	0	3	0
Taylor, Reggie (OF)	.275	27	69	8	19	2	0	0	2	5	12	5
Thorman, Scott (1B)	.248	32	121	14	30	7	0	1	16	6	29	1
Timmons, Wes (3B)	.245	32	94	15	23	6	0	0	12	25	8	6

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Arnold, Derrick	0-0	0.00	1	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
Basner, Ryan	0-0	6.52	6	0	0	9.2	13	7	7	0	10	.302
Bueno, Francisley	1-1	4.00	7	5	0	36.0	37	18	16	14	24	.266
Campillo, Jorge	0-0	0.00	1	1	0	4.1	5	0	0	0	4	.263
DeSalvo, Matt	1-5	3.86	10	2	0	21.0	20	11	9	18	13	.267
Morton, Charlie	1-0	1.76	7	6	0	41.0	25	8	8	13	32	.175
Moss, Damian	1-3	4.67	10	5	0	27.0	27	19	14	11	19	.265
Nelson, Brad	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	1.0	1	0	0	0	2	.250
Nunez, Vladimir	3-0	3.86	14	0	2	21.0	23	9	9	6	22	.277
Ridgway, Jeff	2-0	4.96	16	0	1	16.1	27	13	9	9	15	.370
Rouwenhorst, Jonathon	4-2	4.08	12	6	0	35.1	37	18	16	9	26	.276
Schreiber, Zach	2-1	4.08	16	0	5	17.2	14	8	8	11	13	.215
Shibilo, Andy	1-1	6.00	9	0	1	9.0	14	6	6	2	10	.333
Stockman, Phil	1-0	0.84	12	0	2	21.1	8	2	2	9	18	.116
Williamson, Scott	1-1	9.82	7	1	0	7.1	12	8	8	4	6	.375

MISSISSIPPI 13-25

SOUTHERN LEAGUE AA | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Arnold, Derrick (3B)	.222	5	18	3	4	0	1	0	0	1	6	0
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.163	21	49	4	8	1	1	0	6	6	16	0
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.163	26	80	8	13	4	0	0	6	14	20	0
Camarena, Jose (C)	.160	13	50	1	8	1	0	0	5	1	11	0
Creek, Greg (3B/1B)	.292	37	120	20	35	9	3	2	20	14	23	0
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.129	22	62	4	8	0	0	1	6	0	16	1
Gorecki, Reid (OF)	.250	3	12	2	3	1	0	0	2	1	4	0
Guzman, Javier (SS)	.258	31	120	13	31	7	1	0	5	6	14	2
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.286	22	77	8	22	3	1	2	8	6	8	1
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.278	9	36	5	10	2	1	0	1	5	11	3
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.238	37	122	12	29	8	1	3	18	12	36	0
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.209	35	115	17	24	7	1	2	16	23	42	0
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.200	17	65	4	13	3	0	0	1	3	13	4
Perry, Jason (OF)	.311	22	74	22	23	4	0	8	23	18	25	1
Pope, Van (3B)	.241	9	29	2	7	3	0	0	4	1	2	2
Young, Matt (OF)	.298	37	121	19	36	4	4	1	18	19	12	8

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-0	4.38	7	0	0	12.1	13	10	6	5	9	.265
Cuevas, Jairo	0-2	7.50	3	3	0	12.0	21	10	10	6	8	.382
Evans, Dustin	1-5	9.48	7	7	0	31.1	51	34	33	17	21	.372
Gamble, Jerome	0-1	4.12	12	0	0	19.2	17	9	9	9	10	.236
Jung, Sung Ki	1-2	9.00	14	0	3	13.0	18	16	13	7	15	.316
Medlen, Kris	1-2	4.57	13	0	0	21.2	26	11	11	5	20	.310
Nelson, Brad	1-0	4.76	9	1	0	22.2	29	18	12	3	16	.309
Nix, Michael	2-2	6.23	12	0	1	17.1	19	16	12	12	11	.284
Parr, James	1-3	5.63	8	8	0	40.0	46	26	25	20	32	.299
Payano, Nelson	1-1	4.98	14	0	0	21.2	22	12	12	12	17	.268
Redmond, Todd	2-1	4.02	8	8	0	47.0	53	24	21	5	37	.280
Sencion, Carlos	1-1	5.02	4	3	0	14.1	14	8	8	4	14	.250
Smith, Dan	0-5	5.73	8	8	0	37.2	51	26	24	18	30	.340
Valdez, Luis	0-0	3.71	14	0	5	17.0	16	12	7	10	23	.239

MYRTLE BEACH 23-13

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Alvarez, Roberto (OF)	.107	7	28	3	3	1	0	0	1	2	6	0
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.290	9	31	2	9	2	1	0	1	4	8	2
Bennett, Paul (3B)	.227	7	22	2	5	1	0	0	1	1	9	0
Britton, Phillip (C)	.250	25	100	11	25	6	0	0	7	0	13	0
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.209	34	139	15	29	8	1	4	17	5	19	3
Flowers, Tyler (C)	.236	34	123	14	29	9	0	3	19	27	30	2
Hernandez, Gorkys (OF)	.309	19	81	14	25	5	5	2	11	6	14	5
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.264	23	87	16	23	9	0	5	18	9	35	3
Jones, Travis (2B)	.268	32	123	19	33	9	2	4	23	18	26	9
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.250	10	32	5	8	0	0	1	6	1	5	1
Marcial, Robert (INF)	.371	15	35	8	13	5	0	0	3	7	6	1
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.270	34	137	21	37	12	3	4	22	5	30	0
Owings, Jon (OF)	.243	33	115	14	28	7	0	4	10	6	22	5
Powell, Brandon (3B)	.235	22	85	10	20	5	0	2	8	6	22	2
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.280	14	50	6	14	4	1	1	6	1	5	0
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.211	19	57	11	12	3	1	1	6	7	11	1

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Butts, Brett	3-2	2.61	12	0	4	20.2	14	8	6	9	21	.192
Cofield, Kyle	1-4	4.50	7	7	0	32.0	34	20	16	25	25	.283
Dumesnil, Bryan	1-0	0.00	9	0	0	14.0	11	5	0	8	23	.208
Fellman, Nicholas	1-2	3.14	11	0	1	14.1	11	5	5	4	17	.208
Gunderson, Kevin	1-0	1.10	14	0	9	16.1	13	3	2	6	19	.206
Hanson, Thomas	3-1	0.90	7	7	0	40.0	15	6	4	11	49	.116
Heath, Deunte	4-1	2.14	7	7	0	42.0	35	14	10	22	25	.236
Lopez, Gonzalo	2-2	5.35	8	7	0	33.2	34	21	20	15	34	.266
Lyman, Jeffrey	1-0	3.80	9	0	0	21.1	12	10	9	12	23	.160
Reynoso, Ryne	3-1	3.44	7	7	0	34.0	30	15	13	8	34	.238
Sencion, Carlos	0-0	1.50	3	0	0	12.0	5	2	2	4	15	.132
Tejeda, Ferdin	1-0	2.60	10	0	0	17.1	12	5	5	3	10	.194
Villa, Kelvin	1-0	3.38	6	0	0	8.0	8	3	3	4	6	.258
Vines, Chris	1-0	0.84	7	1	2	21.1	15	5	2	4	21	.190

ROME 13-24

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Chris (C)	.121	10	33	2	4	2	0	0	3	2	19	0
Berres, David (OF)	.241	12	29	3	7	2	0	0	1	4	12	1
Coe, Adam (INF)	.259	30	112	10	29	10	0	1	11	3	19	0
Dominguez, Javier (C)	.216	15	51	5	11	2	0	0	6	5	12	3
Fisher, Michael (SS)	.227	34	132	17	30	2	1	1	11	7	34	2
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.299	36	134	13	40	13	1	2	24	9	20	2
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.172	8	29	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
Gress, Randy (INF)	.100	13	30	1	3	0	0	0	2	2	8	1
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.331	37	142	29	47	10	0	4	18	11	27	8
Johnson, Benjamin (C)	.259	15	54	2	14	0	0	1	1	0	8	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.231	37	130	16	30	8	0	5	16	15	61	4
Lee, Carlos (OF)	.234	19	64	3	15	2	2	0	7	5	14	3
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.429	5	14	3	6	1	0	0	2	1	2	0
Miles, Cole (2B)	.198	31	116	15	23	3	0	0	1	10	24	8
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.267	19	60	8	16	2	0	3	13	12	16	1
Sime, Samuel (3B)	.139	23	79	7	11	2	0	2	6	2	15	7

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	1-3	2.31	7	7	0	35.0	25	12	9	18	34	.192
Beck, Casey	0-0	0.00	4	0	0	3.1	3	0	0	1	4	.231
Broadway, Michael	0-1	5.48	10	0	0	21.1	24	18	13	4	13	.261
Castro, Yeliar	0-2	9.22	10	0	1	13.2	21	18	14	9	13	.350
Diamond, Scott	3-0	2.43	7	7	0	40.2	36	12	11	9	31	.242
Evarts, Steve	2-0	1.50	3	3	0	18.0	15	5	3	1	14	.234
Gearrin, Cory	0-1	5.06	6	0	0	5.1	7	5	3	4	9	.292
Gonzalez, Raul	0-0	12.79	3	0	0	6.1	12	9	9	4	0	.462
Locke, Jeffrey	1-4	4.95	8	8	0	40.0	49	28	22	11	34	.288
Ortegano, Jose	1-2	3.46	7	7	0	39.0	38	18	15	8	39	.260
Osuna, Edgar	1-1	3.26	8	0	3	19.1	19	7	7	4	24	.247
Palica, Thomas	2-2	8.44	7	0	0	10.2	11	11	10	9	14	.268
Pruneda, Benino	1-2	4.40	12	0	2	14.1	13	7	7	9	21	.241
Rivas, Carlos	0-0	1.02	9	0	1	17.2	14	3	2	9	18	.219
Rodgers, Chad	1-6	4.13	8	5	0	32.2	36	20	15	11	30	.275

ESPN Cable Sports Network | **FSN** FSN South | **SS** SportSouth

FOX Fox Broadcasting System | **PTV** Peachtree TV | **TBS**

All games on WGST-AM (640), The Bull (94.9 FM), and Braves Network affiliates.

JUNE

TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1:15 PM CIN SS	2 7:00 PM FLA SS	3 7:00 PM FLA PTV	4 1:00 PM FLA PTV	5 7:00 PM FLA PTV	6 7:30 PM PHI PTV	7 7:00 PM PHI PTV
8 1:30 PM PHI SS	9	10 8:05 PM CHC PTV	11 8:05 PM CHC FSN	12 2:20 PM CHC PTV	13 10:05 PM LAA SS	14 9:05 PM LAA SS
15 TBD LAA SS	16 8:05 PM COL SS	17 8:05 PM TX PTV	18 8:05 PM TX FSN	19 2:05 PM TX PTV	20 7:30 PM SEA PTV	21 7:00 PM SEA PTV
22 1:30 M SEA SS	23 7:00 PM MIL FSN	24 7:00 PM MIL PTV	25 1:00 PM MIL PTV	26	27 7:07 PM TOR SS	28 1:07 PM PM TOR SS
29 1:07 PM TOR SS	30					

JULY

ALL-STAR GAME | TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7:00 PM PHI PTV	2 7:00 PM PHI FSN	3 7:00 PM PHI PTV	4 7:30 PM HOU PTV	5 7:00 PM HOU PTV
6 1:30 PM HOU SS	7 10:10 PM LAD SS	8 10:10 PM LAD SS	9 10:10 PM LAD FSN	10	11 10:05 PM SD SS	12 10:05 PM SD SS
13 4:05 PM SD SS	14	15 8:00 PM ALL-STAR GAME YANKEE STADIUM	16	17	18 7:30 PM WSH PTV	19 7:00 PM WSH PTV
20 1:30 PM WSH SS	21 7:10 PM FLA SS	22 7:10 PM FLA SS	23 7:10 PM FLA FSN	24	25 7:05 PM PHI PTV	26 3:55 PM PHI FOX
27 1:35 PM PHI SS	28 7:00 PM STL SS	29 7:00 PM STL PTV	30 7:00 PM STL FSN	31 7:00 PM STL PTV		

AUGUST

TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 7:30 PM MIL PTV	2 3:55 PM MIL FOX
3 1:30 PM MIL SS	4 10:15 PM SF SS	5 10:15 PM SF SS	6 3:45 PM SF FSN	7 9:40 PM AZ SS	8 9:40 PM AZ SS	9 3:55 PM AZ FOX
10 4:10 PM AZ SS	11	12 7:00 PM CHC PTV	13 7:00 PM CHC FSN	14 7:00 PM CHC FSN	15 7:30 PM SF PTV	16 7:00 PM SF PTV
17 1:30 PM SF SS	18 4:30 PM SF SS	19 7:10 PM NYM PTV	20 7:10 PM NYM FSN	21 7:10 PM NYM PTV	22 8:15 PM STL SS	23 3:55 PM STL FOX
24 2:15 PM STL SS	25	26 7:00 PM FLA SS	27 7:00 PM FLA FSN	28 7:00 PM FLA SS	29 7:35 PM WSH SS	30 7:10 PM WSH SS
31 1:35 PM WSH SS						

TENTATIVE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
FOR SEASON, GROUP AND SUITE TICKET INFORMATION CALL (404) 577-9100 OR V braves.com

SEPTEMBER

TURNER FIELD | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 1:10 PM FLA SS	2 7:10 PM FLA SS	3 1:10 PM FLA FSN	4 7:00 PM WSH FSN	5 7:30 PM WSH PTV	6 7:00 PM WSH SS
7 1:30 PM WSH SS	8	9 7:00 PM COL PTV	10 7:00 PM COL FSN	11 7:00 PM COL PTV	12 7:10 PM NYM ESPN	13 3:55 PM NYM FOX
14 1:10 PM NYM SS	15	16 7:00 PM PHI SS	17 7:00 PM PHI FSN	18 7:00 PM PHI PTV	19 7:30 PM NYM PTV	20 7:00 PM NYM SS
21 1:30 PM NYM SS	22 7:05 PM PHI PTV	23 7:05 PM PHI PTV	24 7:05 PM PHI FSN	25	26 8:05 PM HOU SS	27 7:05 PM HOU SS
28 2:05 PM HOU SS	29	30				

OCTOBER

POST-SEASON DATES ARE TENTATIVE, UNOFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 08 DIVISION SERIES	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 08 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 1	23 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 2	24	25 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 3
26 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 4	27 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 5	28	29 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 6	30 08 WORLD SERIES GAME 7	31	

ROSTER

As of May 13

PITCHERS (12)

46 MANNY ACOSTA
30 JEFF BENNETT
56 BLAINE BOYER
57 JORGE CAMPILLO
*38 BUDDY CARLYLE
47 TOM GLAVINE
*51 MIKE GONZALEZ
*32 MIKE HAMPTON
15 TIM HUDSON
36 CHUCK JAMES
49 JAIR JURRJENS
*58 PETER MOYLAN
13 WILL OHMAN
48 CHRIS RESOP
37 JO-JO REYES
34 ROYCE RING
*29 JOHN SMOLTZ
*39 RAFAEL SORIANO

CATCHERS (2)

16 BRIAN MCCANN
27 CORKY MILLER
*5 BRAYAN PENA

INFIELDERS (7)

19 YUNEL ESCOBAR
8 RUBEN GOTAY
4 OMAR INFANTE
2 KELLY JOHNSON
10 CHIPPER JONES
20 GREG NORTON
*14 MARTIN PRADO
24 MARK TEIXEIRA

OUTFIELDERS (4)

18 GREGOR BLANCO
23 MATT DIAZ
7 JEFF FRANCOEUR
11 MARK KOTSAY

* DISABLED LIST

TICKETING

TO PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT **braves.com/tickets**

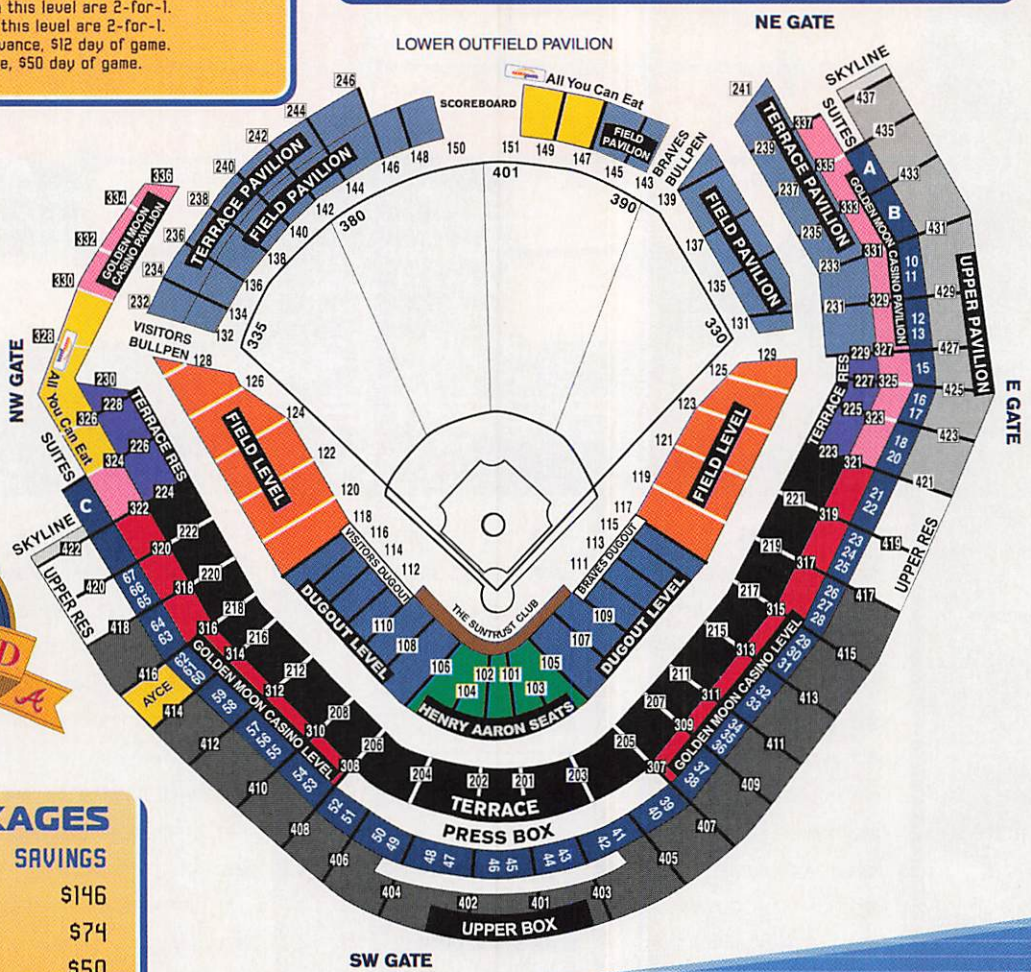
INDIVIDUAL PRICES

SECTION	REGULAR	PREMIUM*
Henry Aaron	$70	$74
Dugout	$60	$64
Golden Moon Casino Level	$38	$42
Field	$36	$40
Terrace	$36	$40
Club Pavilion	$28	$32
Terrace Reserved	$24	$28
Outfield Pavilion**	$22	$26
Upper Box	$12	$16
Upper Reserved***	$8	$12
Upper Pavilion	$6	$6

* All Friday, Saturday games and Opening Day.
** All Wednesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
*** All Tuesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
Parking: $10 per car in advance, $12 day of game.
$40 per bus in advance, $50 day of game.

FULL SEASON

SECTION	PRICE	SAVINGS
Dugout	$4,316	$772
Terrace	$2,490	$606
Field	$2,490	$606
Club	$2,822	$440
Outfield Pavilion	$996	$938
Upper Box	$830	$274
Upper Pavilion	$249	$249
Terrace Reserved*	$1,826	$274
Club Pavilion*	$2,158	$274
All You Can Eat Outfield	$2,905	$965
All You Can Eat Club Pavilion	$3,984	$1,546



PARKING PACKAGES

	PRICE	SAVINGS
Full Season	$850	$146
Half Season	$430	$74
Weekend	$310	$50
20-Game	$200	$40

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $12 for adults, $7 for children and $10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER	
Monday - Saturday	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday	1 - 3 p.m.
OCTOBER - MARCH	
Monday - Saturday	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
DEC. 23-JAN. 3	CLOSED

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	$7
MILITARY	$7
GROUP	$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	$5
ADULTS	$7

*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

TICKET SPECIALS

- Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesdays: Buy 1 Upper Reserved for $8, get 1 Free.
- MasterCard Grand Slam Pack: 4 Tickets, 4 hotdogs, 4 Cokes, parking and yearbook, starting at $59.
- McDonald's Outfield Advantage: Wednesdays, Buy 1 Outfield Pavilion for $22, Get 1 Free.
- College Discount: Show college ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
- Military Discount: Show ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
- Topps Thursdays: Present/surrender 1 Topps baseball card wrapper at Turner Field ticket window to receive 1 Free Outfield Pavilion ticket with the purchase of 1 ticket of equal/greater value.

* All ticket offers subject to availability. Seating restrictions may apply. Not to be combined with any other discount, promotion or coupon. No reservations or tickets by phone or outlet. Free ticket offers can only be transacted at Turner Field ticket office.

HALF SEASON

Section	Price	Savings
Field	$1,344	$276
Club	$1,512	$192
Outfield Pavilion	$714	$318
Upper Box	$462	$150

WEEKEND PACKAGE

Section	Price	Savings
Field	$960	$180
Club	$1,080	$120
Outfield Pavilion	$510	$210
Upper Box	$330	$90

20-GAME PLANS

Section	Price	Savings
Club	$720	$92
Field	$640	$132

9-GAME FLEX PLAN

Pick a minimum of 9 games for package prices starting at $99.

JUNE EVENTS

June 4 vs. Marlins	Jeff Francoeur T-shirts (Delta)
June 5 vs. Marlins	Singles Night; Superhero Night
June 7 vs. Phillies	Jerseys Off Our Backs
June 8 vs. Phillies	Signature Bat Giveaway (Home Depot); Alumni Meet & Greet
June 22 vs. Mariners	Alumni Meet & Greet
June 24 vs. Brewers	Gospel Fest
June 25 vs. Brewers	Brian McCann Bobblehead Giveaway (Coca-Cola)

4-GAME PACK

	TERRACE LEVEL $140	OUTFIELD PAVILION $84	UPPER BOX $44	
T-SHIRT GIVEAWAY PACK	June 4 (Florida)	July 2 (Philadelphia)	Aug. 13 (Cubs)	Sept. 10 (Colorado)
FRIDAY FIREWORKS PACK	June 6 (Philadelphia)	June 20 (Seattle)	July 18 (Washington)	Aug. 15 (San Francisco)
SATURDAY PACK	June 7 (Philadelphia)	June 21 (Seattle)	Aug. 16 (San Francisco)	Sept. 6 (Washington)
SUNDAY PACK	June 8 (Philadelphia)	June 22 (Seattle)	July 6 (Houston)	Aug. 17 (San Francisco)
SUMMER GETAWAY PACK	July 19 (Washington)	July 20 (Washington)	Aug. 2 (Milwaukee)	Aug. 3 (Milwaukee)
CUBS/CARDS PACK	July 30 (St. Louis)	July 31 (St. Louis)	Aug. 13 (Cubs)	Aug. 14 (Cubs)

Braves INDIVIDUAL STATS

AS OF 5/13/08

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
JONES	.415	36	142	27	59	8	0	10	31	97	18	13	0	0	.475	.683	4
RIGHT	.404		57		23	2	0	1	7	28	6	4			.446	.491	
LEFT	.424		85		36	6	0	9	24	69	12	9			.495	.812	
ESCOBAR	.314	37	140	26	44	5	1	3	15	60	18	21	2	0	.392	.429	4
BLANCO	.313	26	64	7	20	4	0	0	3	24	13	15	2	0	.429	.375	0
INFANTE	.308	4	13	0	4	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	.308	.385	0
MCCANN	.303	36	132	19	40	12	1	7	21	75	15	11	0	0	.372	.568	0
KOTSAY	.302	35	129	18	39	7	2	3	18	59	12	12	2	1	.362	.457	0
PENA	.286	14	14	3	4	1	0	0	0	5	1	2	0	0	.333	.357	0
RIGHT	.333		3		1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0			.500	.333	
LEFT	.273		11		3	1	0	0	0	4	0	2			.273	.364	
PRADO	.282	18	39	10	11	3	2	0	6	18	7	3	1	0	.462	.383	3
FRANCOEUR	.277	38	155	20	43	13	1	3	24	67	9	19	0	1	.321	.432	0
DIAZ	.269	32	108	9	29	2	0	2	14	37	2	25	4	0	.279	.343	0
JOHNSON	.268	33	123	19	33	8	0	4	15	53	13	23	4	2	.333	.431	4
TEIXEIRA	.261	36	138	20	36	9	0	5	21	60	19	18	0	0	.354	.435	2
RIGHT	.218		55		12	1	0	2	8	19	9	6			.328	.345	
LEFT	.289		83		24	8	0	3	13	41	10	12			.372	.494	
GOTAY	.238	25	21	2	5	1	0	0	0	6	6	8	1	0	.407	.286	0
RIGHT	.000		2		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2			.500	.000	
LEFT	.263		19		5	1	0	0	0	6	4	6			.391	.316	
NORTON	.231	8	13	1	3	0	0	0	3	1	5	1	0	0	.444	.231	1
RIGHT	.167		6		1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1			.286	.167	
LEFT	.286		7		2	0	0	0	2	2	4	0			.545	.286	
AL	.438	6	16	2	7	2	0	0	4	9	2	4	0	0	.500	.563	1
MILLER	.067	8	15	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	0	0	.176	.067	0
ATLANTA	.283	38	1,326	185	375	74	7	37	177	574	146	203	16	4	.353	.433	24
OPPONENTS	.234	38	1,245	143	291	73	7	22	134	444	129	269	28	8	.312	.357	31

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Kotsay** (1.000-1-0-0), **Norton** (.667-2-0-3), **Diaz** (.333-2-0-0), **Johnson** (.333-1-1-4), **Pena** (.286-4-0-1), **Blanco** (.250-1-0-0), **Gotay** (.222-18-4-0-0), **Infante** (.000-0-0-0), **McCann** (.000-0-0-0), **Miller** (.000-0-0-0), **Prado** (.000-0-0-0), **Reyes** (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.263-15-1-7).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Jurrjens** (.133-2-0-0), **Glavine** (.111-1-0-1), **Hudson** (.063-1-0-2), **Acosta** (.000-0-0-0), **Bennett** (.000-0-0-0), **Boyer** (.000-0-0-0), **James** (.000-0-0-0), **Reyes** (.000-0-0-0), **Smoltz** (.000-0-0-1). **STAFF** (.058-4-0-4).

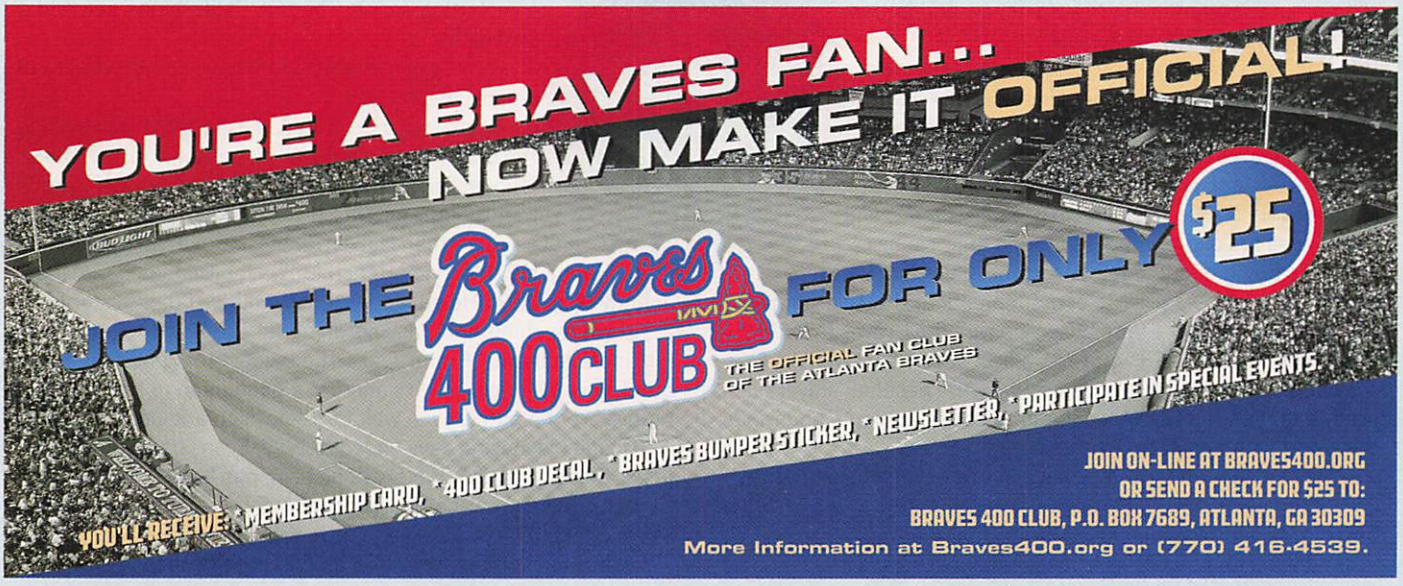
BATTING KEY: AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors

PITCHING KEY: W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, SV-Saves, SVO-Save opportunities, IP-Innings pitched, WHIP-Walks-plus-hits per inning pitched, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	SVO	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO	WHIP	OBA	E
CAMPILLO	0-0	1.47	12	0	0	0	18.1	11	7	3	0	5	15	0.87	.164	0
MOYLAN	0-1	1.59	7	0	1	2	5.2	5	1	1	1	1	5	1.06	.217	0
SMOLTZ	3-2	2.00	5	5	0	0	27	22	6	6	2	8	36	1.11	.214	3
SORIANO	0-0	2.25	4	0	1	1	4	2	1	1	0	3	5	1.25	.143	0
HUDSON	6-2	2.54	9	9	0	0	56.2	46	18	16	1	10	35	0.99	.222	1
OHMAN	1-0	2.87	21	0	0	1	15.2	17	7	5	1	7	11	1.53	.279	0
JURRJENS	4-3	3.10	8	8	0	0	49.1	37	17	17	1	17	41	1.09	.206	0
CARLYLE	0-0	3.38	9	0	0	0	8	8	3	3	0	5	7	1.63	.267	0
BENNETT	0-2	3.69	16	3	1	1	31.2	26	13	13	3	18	20	1.39	.226	0
ACOSTA	1-1	4.00	18	0	2	2	18	15	8	8	3	11	12	1.44	.227	1
BOYER	0-3	4.03	21	0	0	1	22.1	15	11	10	2	4	24	0.85	.190	0
GLAVINE	0-1	4.03	6	6	0	0	29	31	14	13	3	0	16	1.62	.292	0
REYES	1-1	4.30	3	3	0	0	14.2	20	8	7	0	5	11	1.70	.328	0
RING	1-0	6.35	15	0	0	0	5.2	4	4	4	0	2	7	1.06	.200	0
JAMES	2-2	7.58	4	4	0	0	19	19	16	16	4	11	17	1.58	.268	0
RESOP	0-1	7.84	11	0	0	0	10.1	13	9	9	1	6	9	1.84	.310	0
ATLANTA	19-19	3.54	38	38	5	8	335.1	291	143	132	22	129	269	1.35	.234	5
OPPONENTS	19-19	4.59	38	38	10	13	335.1	375	185	171	37	146	203	1.55	.283	3

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
1	3/30	WAS	A	L	2-3	Moylan (0-1)	Jones (1)	0-1	5	-1/2
2	3/31	PIT	H	L	11-12 (12)	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1)	0-2	5	-2
3	4/2	PIT	H	W	10-2	Jurrjens (1-0)	Diaz (1), Teixeira (1), Escobar (1)	1-2	T-3	-2
4	4/3	PIT	H	L	3-4 (10)	Resop (0-1)	—	1-3	5	-2
5	4/5	NYM	H	W	11-5	Hudson (1-0)	Johnson (1)	2-3	T-4	-1
6	4/6	NYM	H	W	3-1	Smoltz (1-0)	Teixeira (2)	3-3	T-1	—
7	4/7	COL	A	L	1-2	Boyer (0-2)	—	3-4	T-2	-1
8	4/8	COL	A	L	3-4	Jurrjens (1-1)	Kotsay (1)	3-5	T-3	-1 1/2
9	4/9	COL	A	L	6-12	James (0-1)	McCann (2)	3-6	T-4	-2 1/2
10	4/11	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (2-0)	Escobar (2)	4-6	4	-3
11	4/12	WAS	A	W	10-2	Smoltz (2-0)	Francoeur 2 (3), McCann (3)	5-6	4	-2
12	4/13	WAS	A	L	4-5	Glavine (0-1)	Jones (2)	5-7	4	-2
13	4/15	FLA	A	L	0-4	Jurrjens (1-2)	--	5-8	4	-3
14	4/16	FLA	A	L	5-6	Hudson (2-1)	Escobar (3)	5-9	4	-4
15	4/17	FLA	A	W	8-0	Smoltz (3-0)	Jones 2 (4), Teixeira (3), McCann (4), Johnson (2)	6-9	4	-3
16	4/18	LAD	H	W	6-1	Ohman (1-0)	Jones 2 (6)	7-9	4	-2 1/2
17	4/19	LAD	H	W	4-1	James (1-1)	--	8-9	3	-2 1/2
18	4/20	LAD	H	W	6-1	Jurrjens (2-2)	Johnson (3), Teixeira (4)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/21	WAS	H	W	7-3	Hudson (3-1)	McCann (5)	10-9	3	-2
20	4/22	WAS	H	L	0-6	Smoltz (3-1)	--	10-10	4	-2
21	4/23	FLA	H	L	2-7	Bennett (0-1)	Diaz (2)	10-11	4	-3
22	4/24	FLA	H	W	7-4	James (2-1)	Jones (7)	11-11	4	-2
23	4/25	NYM	A	W	6-3	Jurrjens (3-2)	Johnson (4)	12-11	3	-2
24	4/26	NYM	A	L	3-4	Hudson (3-2)	--	12-12	4	-2
25	4/27	NYM	A	L	3-6	Smoltz (3-2)	--	12-13	4	-3
26	4/29	WAS	A	L	3-6	Boyer (0-3)	Jones (8)	12-14	4	-3
27	4/30	WAS	A	L	2-3 (12)	Acosta (0-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/2	CIN	H	W	2-0	Hudson (4-2)	McCann (6)	13-15	4	-3
29	5/3	CIN	H	W	9-1	Reyes (1-0)	--	14-15	4	-2
30	5/4	CIN	H	W	14-7	Ring (1-0)	Jones (9), Kotsay (2)	15-15	4	-2
31	5/6	SD	H	W	5-3	Jurrjens (4-2)	Jones (10), Kotsay (3)	16-15	T-3	-1 1/2
32	5/7	SD	H	W	5-2	Hudson (5-2)	--	17-15	T-3	-1 1/2
33	5/8	SD	H	W	5-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	18-15	3	-1 1/2
34	5/9	PIT	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-2)	--	18-16	4	-2 1/2
35	5/10	PIT	A	L	2-5	James (2-2)	Teixeira (5)	18-17	4	-3 1/2
36	5/12 (1 of 2)	PIT	A	L	0-5	Jurrjens (4-3)	--	18-18	4	-4 1/2
37	5/12 (2 of 2)	PIT	A	W	8-1	Hudson (6-2)	McCann (7)	19-18	4	-3 1/2
38	5/13	PHI	A	L	4-5	Reyes (1-1)	--	19-19	4	-3 1/2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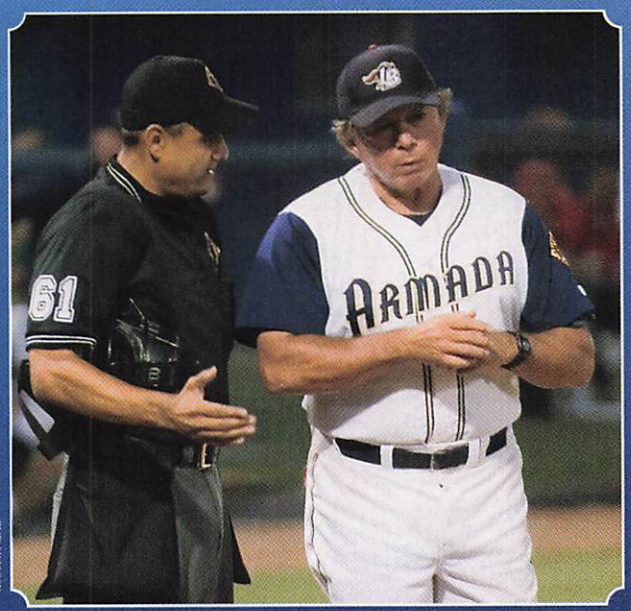

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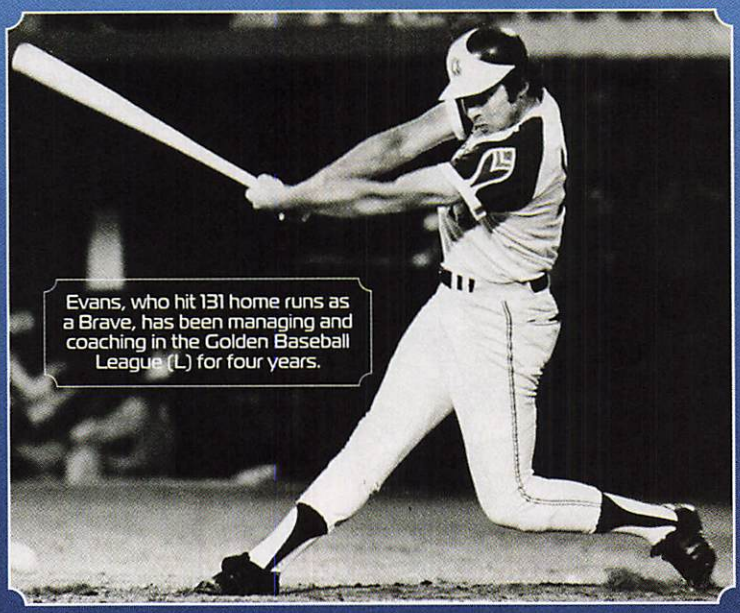

Evans, who hit 131 home runs as a Brave, has been managing and coaching in the Golden Baseball League (L) for four years.

ATLANTA BRAVES

THE GREEN TEAM

400-Home Run Hitter Darrell Evans Founds Earth-Friendly Group of Ballplayers

BY BRIAN KNAPP

AT A STAGE IN LIFE when many retired major leaguers favor golfing, fishing and the pursuit of other treasured pastimes, 60-year-old Darrell Evans instead mans the frontlines in an ongoing struggle to preserve the health of the world in which we live.

Earlier this year, Evans founded The Fields of Green Team, a non-profit organization committed to spreading ideas, sparking dialogue, and recommending products "that can begin to reverse our environmental crisis and clean up the air we all breathe." The Fields of Green Team advocates recycling, improving home energy efficiency, and bettering fuel economy in automobiles.

Evans isn't tackling the challenge alone. He enlisted the aid of several other likeminded ex-players, including one-time Red Sox third baseman and manager Butch Hobson, eccentric lefthander Bill "Spaceman" Lee, and former Braves outfielder Gary Matthews (1977-80). They plan to use their names and reputations to build awareness around their cause.

"We're trying to put together former major league baseball players who want to do something about the environment," said Evans, primarily a third baseman with the Braves from 1969-76, who returned in 1989 more as a first baseman. "We've gotten a great response. Maybe that's why we were baseball players... to bring attention to this. We're trying to educate people and make the world a better place."

Fans can sign up for the organization's newsletter at fieldsofgreenteam.com and will receive a free report called "Hitting Secrets Darrell Evans Learned From Hank Aaron."

In addition to his work as a conservationist, Evans maintains an active role in the game, as well. He spent the past three seasons (2005-07) as manager of the Long Beach Armada, an independent team in the California-based Golden Baseball League. Evans led the Armada to two league championship series in three years but was replaced as manager by Steve Yeager following last season.

"They wanted a local guy," Evans said. "That was part of my having to move on."

Evans did not stay unemployed for long. When Hall-of-Fame catcher Gary Carter was named manager of the GBL's Orange County Flyers in December, he offered Evans a job as hitting coach. The two Californians seemed a perfect fit.

"I thought it might be fun to work with a buddy of mine," Evans said.

Evans has a deep well of experience upon which to draw. He played for 21 seasons in the major leagues and hit 414 career home runs (41st all-time, though he was just the 22nd player to reach 400) – more than Hall-of-Famers Duke Snider (407), Al Kaline (399), Johnny Bench (389), Joe DiMaggio (361) and Johnny Mize (359). He also drew 1,605 walks, 10th in history.

"I love teaching and passing along all the great things I was fortunate to learn," Evans said. "The biggest thing I learned as a hitter was patience. You try and get a good pitch to hit. The best hitters are the hitters who wait for their pitch and don't miss it."

Though his playing days ended in 1989, Evans has kept himself in excellent condition. Baseball, he said, has kept him young.

"I can still throw batting practice," Evans said. "The fences seem a little bit further away. I have warning track power now."

Evans also served previously as the hitting coach for the New

York Yankees (1990) and the minor league hitting instructor for the Colorado Rockies. He keeps the door open to the possibility of one day managing in the big leagues, but understands time is not on his side.

"To be realistic, I don't think it's going to happen," he said. "You have to be in the right place at the right time."

While his hopes of holding the reins of a big league team have slowly faded, life on the independent league circuit suits him well – even though nine- to 10-hour bus rides are not out of the ordinary.

"I think it's a great way to learn about life," Evans said. "You become a family."

He has always been happy in the dugout, as a coach and as a player.

"I got my first baseball uniform when I was 4 or 5 years old," Evans said. "It's what I always wanted to be."

Major league scouts identified his talents early. Evans was drafted by four other teams before he signed with the Kansas City Athletics as a seventh-round selection in 1967. A year later, after the team relocated to California, the Braves plucked him from the Oakland farm system in the Rule V Draft. Evans debuted in Atlanta in 1969, and by 1972 had established himself as a fixture in the Braves' lineup.

As fate would have it, he was on first base when Hank Aaron hit his 715th home run in 1974 and passed Babe Ruth for first on the all-time list.

"I'm the only guy who can say that," said Evans, who once was described by stat guru Bill James as the most underrated player of all-time. "By the time I got to second, I wanted to get out of the way, so I ran as fast as I could to get to home plate."

Evans played in parts of eight seasons with the Braves before being dealt to San Francisco in 1976. His power numbers took a dive playing in Candlestick Park, but his career ultimately carried him to Detroit, where he won a World Series championship in 1984.

He flourished in the Motor City and reclaimed his place among the game's premier home run hitters. He became the oldest man ever to win a home run title when he hit 40 at age 38 in 1985. Evans also became the first player to hit 40 homers in each league. He had 41 with the Braves in 1973 when he, Dave Johnson (43) and Aaron (40) became the only three teammates ever to reach 40 in the same season. Evans now resides in Long Beach, Calif., with his wife of 18 years.

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

MELISSA STONE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

ATLANTA BRAVES

BY STEVE FALL

AS THE EXECUTIVE assistant to John Schuerholz and Frank Wren, Melissa Stone has insight into the baseball world that most people can only dream about. While she won't know all the details, she even has an idea when a big trade is in the works.

"The trade deadline is hectic. There's no doubt about that," said Stone, who moved into her current position in 1999. "They're on the phone constantly. I handle the phones and their correspondence, in addition to my other duties."

Stone fills a number of other roles, depending on the time of year. Early in the season, she describes much of her work as "transaction maintenance." She takes care of anything required by Major League Baseball when the Braves option or recall a player, or place somebody on the disabled list.

The off-season becomes especially busy for Stone. She prepares the contracts – most of which get signed during the off-season – and sends them to Major League Baseball for approval. She's also among the club's first arrivals for spring training at Disney's Wide World of Sports. There she handles all the logistics required to set up offices for all the Atlanta-based staff that relocate to Florida for a couple of months.

The Atlanta-born Stone got her first job with the Braves in 1993 while attending graduate school at the University of Georgia. The help of a family friend led to a part-time opportunity with the team's promotional staff. She worked hard, often arriving early and leaving late. She also had a great time in the process, making the most of activities like passing out giveaway items at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium's entrance gates.

In 1994, Stone worked in the press box serving food and drinks until the strike hit that August. She later moved to customer service to help field calls from fans regarding the strike, and stayed with that department through the following season. In 1996, she landed her first full-time position in season and group ticket sales.

"It took me three years. But by working hard and paying my dues, I got in," said Stone, who also earned her masters in sport management at Georgia.

Stone later worked in minor league and college baseball, and had a brief stint at BellSouth. In November 1999, she got a call from the Braves human resources department to interview for a position as Schuerholz's assistant. She got the job and now looks forward to every day.

"Baseball just makes everything better," said the 37-year-old Stone. "If you're having a bad day, you can just come to the ballpark and it makes it all go away. To have the opportunity to work with a staff that I consider the best is a real treat for me. I walk in the building every morning and look up at the Turner Field sign and think that I'm the luckiest person in the world."

Stone's background shows that perseverance pays off for those seeking jobs in Major League Baseball.

"If you keep knocking on doors, eventually one is going to open," she said. "And don't give up. It takes time, so be patient. Knowing that you love something and then making that your job, the rewards and the payoffs are so great."

ALUMNI NOTES

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) was to be awarded an honorary degree from Concordia University Wisconsin and deliver the school's commencement speech during ceremonies on May 17. The honorary doctorate of laws will recognize Aaron "for the inspirational service he has provided to the nation through his leadership in America's favorite pastime and his creation of the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation which helps children with limited opportunities develop their talents and pursue their dream." Concordia is located in the Milwaukee suburb of Mequon, where Aaron used to reside.

Dale Murphy (OF/1B/C, 1976-90) is offering a $1,000 scholarship to the monthly winner of an essay contest through his I Won't Cheat! Foundation that educates children about the importance of not cheating in sports, school and life. I Won't Cheat assemblies are taking place in schools around the country. Murphy is also working with youth organizations that want to wear a patch on their players' uniforms to symbolize a commitment to do things the right way. Interested students of all educational levels can visit iwontcheat.com to obtain the monthly theme and submit an essay.

Julio Franco (1B, 2001-05, '07), who hoped to play until he was 50 years old, retired from the Mexican League May 3 at age 49. He turns 50 on Aug. 23. Franco last played in the majors with the Braves at the end of the 2007 season. He played for the Mets earlier last year when he became the oldest player to hit a home run in major league history. He broke into the majors in 1982 with the Phillies.

Greg Maddux (RHP, 1993-2003), now with San Diego, became the ninth pitcher in history to reach 350 wins on May 10.

Chris Reitsma (RHP, 2004-06), who didn't make the Seattle Mariners opening day roster and declined to report to the minors, has announced he will end his career by pitching for Canada in the Olympics this summer in China.

The late **Billy Southworth** (OF, 1921-23, Manager, 1946-51), who will be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame July 27, has been recognized with a new website, billysouthworth.com. He managed the Boston Braves to the 1948 National League pennant. On the same day that he is enshrined at Cooperstown, South-worth will be remembered in a 2 p.m. ceremony at Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus, Ohio. The program will be presented by Randy Mobley, president of the International League, and Ray Stein, sports editor of the Columbus Dispatch. For more details see greenlawncolumbus.org.

The Yankees' **Kyle Farnsworth** (RHP, 2005) was suspended three games and fined for throwing behind the head of Boston's Manny Ramirez April 17. The suspension was reduced to one game upon appeal.

Ryan Klesko (1B/OF, 1992-99) announced his retirement April 18.

Dan Kolb (RHP, 2005) was released by Pawtucket, the Red Sox' Triple-A team.

Tom Martin (LHP, 2004-05) signed with the Long Island Ducks of the independent Atlantic League.

Colorado designated **Jose Capellan** (RHP, 2004) for assignment.

The Nationals optioned **Ray King** (LHP, 2003) to Triple-A April 24. He refused the assignment and became a free agent.

Greg Olson (C, 1990-93) was in Columbus, Ga., for a four-day hunting and golfing trip in mid-April. Olson, who lives outside Minneapolis, also spoke to the baseball team at Brookstone School.

Don Sutton (broadcaster, 1989-2006) is the national spokesperson for the Stay In The Game (stayingame.com) program for kidney cancer awareness. Sutton has been living with the disease for six years.

BIRTHDAYS

JUNE

1ST	ROY MAJTYKA (69)
2ND	JACK PIERCE (60)
	MIKE DAVEY (56)
	MIKE STANTON (41)
	KURT ABBOTT (39)
	MIKE KELLY (38)
3RD	STEVE LYONS (48)
5TH	EDDIE JOOST (92)
	RUSS ORTIZ (34)
6TH	CARL WILLEY (77)
	MERV RETTENMUND (65)
	LARRY HOWARD (63)
	TONY GRAFFANINO (36)
8TH	PETE ORR (29)
9TH	ROY SMALLEY (82)
10TH	ELIAS SOSA (58)
	RICK CAMP (55)
	RANDY JOHNSON (52)
	JEFF BENNETT (28)
11TH	FRANK THOMAS (79)
	ODALIS PEREZ (31)
12TH	RYAN KLESKO (37)
	DAMON HOLLINS (34)
13TH	ERNIE WHITT (56)
	DARRELL MAY (36)
	CORY ALDRIDGE (29)
15TH	TY CLINE (69)
	BRUCE DAL CANTON (66)
	AL CLOSTER (65)
	KEN HENDERSON (62)
	DUSTY BAKER (59)
	BRETT BUTLER (51)
16TH	ERNIE JOHNSON (84)
	KEN JOHNSON (75)
	WALLY JOYNER (46)
18TH	TAYLOR PHILLIPS (75)
	ANDRES GALARRAGA (47)
19TH	BOB ASPROMONTE (70)
	BRUCE CHEN (31)
20TH	PAUL BAKO (36)
21ST	MIKE BEARD (58)
	LUIS RIVERA (30)
22ND	WILLIE HARRIS (30)
23RD	DAVE BRISTOL (75)
	JOHN RABB (48)
25TH	HUMBERTO ROBINSON (78)
	ALEJANDRO PEÑA (49)
	BRAD WOODALL (39)
	MICHAEL TUCKER (37)
26TH	GIL GARRIDO (67)
27TH	JOHNNY ESTRADA (32)
	DARYLE WARD (33)
	CHRIS WOODWARD (32)
28TH	DON BAYLOR (59)
	KEVIN MCGLINCHY (31)
	RON MAHAY (37)
29TH	BOB SHAW (75)
	JIMMY FREEMAN (57)
	EDDIE MILLER (51)
	PABLO MARTINEZ (39)
	TREY HODGES (30)

ChopTalk
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

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Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750
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PUBLISHER
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Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

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PRINTER
Publisher's Press

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES
McMillen Communications

NEWSSTAND OPERATIONS
Curtis Circulation Company
Publishers Single Copy Sales Services

BUSINESS OPERATIONS
Rob Calcutta

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Send address changes or corrections to: ChopTalk, P.O. Box 80750, Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750 or call 1-877-655-CHOP (2467) or visit braves.com/choptalk.

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12829 Trinity Dr.
Stafford, TX 77477-4214
PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
E-MAIL Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER

WOOF! WOOF!

THE QUESTION for Frank Wren was an obvious one, considering this is his first year as Braves GM and the fact that it has been a trying start to a season of much promise.

Asked how he was holding up, Wren replied, with only the slightest hint of pain, "I'm holding up all right."

It hasn't been easy on any of us of the Braves faith. Dominant at Turner Field but anemic on the road... Close to a complete washout in one-run games... Feast or famine hitting - win big or lose heartbreakers.

No it hasn't been easy. At times, it's been downright excruciating to watch this team, even in light of Chipper Jones making hitting - the most difficult challenge in sports - seem like it's almost easy.

So, we turn to statistics, the backbone of baseball, to try to find some form of explanation for the "Jekyll and Hyde" nature of this team, as Wren calls it in his column this month.

Lo and behold, the mystery only deepens.

There are so many different stats these days that getting lost in them is easy to do, even for fans who aren't math challenged. And while there are those who discount the importance of batting average and earned run average to the overall makeup of a player, pitcher or team, they are the old standbys, and deservedly so.

Remarkably, while the Braves were struggling around the .500 mark in wins and losses, they were leading the league in team ERA and were fluctuating between first and second in team batting average.

It just doesn't seem possible that this team could be performing so well in those departments, particularly with all the injuries the pitching staff has absorbed. But it's there, for all to see and digest.

Do these numbers lie like a dog on Bark in the Park Day, or do they offer a semblance of truth, not to mention hope that there are better days to come?

No one really has the answer to that. Only the next four months of games will provide the answer. But we like Wren's reasoning (see page 15 again) that if this team is good enough to post the best home record in baseball, surely it eventually will sort out its inconsistencies to play better on a day-to-day basis.

There is no shortage of hitting talent on this club, so it seems reasonable that sooner or later, the overall run production will improve, leading to better results in close games. And that could be enough to put the Braves over the top, at least in the division, considering that they remained in the hunt despite all the woes of the first two months.

Keep in mind that four of the eight teams that made the post-season in 2007 played under .500 in April, including the Rockies (10-16) who eventually won the NL pennant.

A critical ingredient to the final two-thirds of the season is how the Braves replace John Smoltz in the starting rotation, and how his arm responds to a return to the bullpen. By the time you read this, or shortly thereafter, it's conceivable that the bullpen could be bolstered not only by the addition of Smoltz, but also with the return of Rafael Soriano and Mike Gonzalez.

Of course, the starters have to be able to turn over a lead to the relievers. Tim Hudson, Tom Glavine and Jair Jurrjens give the Braves an effective first three starters. The other two slots remain to be sorted out between Jo-Jo Reyes, Chuck James, Jeff Bennett and Buddy Carlyle. The key to that situation, however, may still be at Richmond.

Righthander Charlie Morton, who has some of the best stuff in the organization, is showing every indication (2-0 with a 1.69 ERA and only 30 hits allowed in 48 innings) that he's close to Atlanta-ready. If he can make the transition, he could tighten up the rotation quickly.

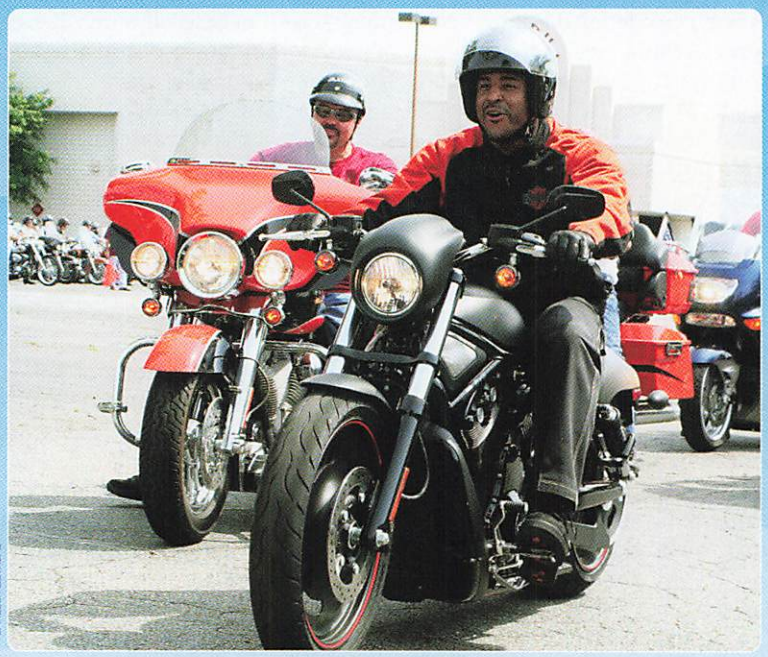
If the bullpen continues to come together with Smoltz, Soriano and Gonzalez, there's enough material available to piece together a rotation capable of winning the East.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed May 22. The July issue will be mailed June 25.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**

Grand marshal Brian Jordan proves he can handle the duties - no sidecar needed!



CARLOS RESTREPO

JOY RIDE

FORMER BRAVES outfielder turned FSN broadcaster, **Brian Jordan**, was the grand marshal for the American Diabetes Association's Ride to Live, a charity motorcycle ride held May 10. The only catch was that Jordan (a) didn't own a motorcycle, and (b) didn't know how to ride one! The organizers of the event offered a solution: Put him in a sidecar! "There was no way that was going to happen!" claimed Jordan. So, two months before the event, the intrepid Jordan took a four-day safety course at the Rider's Edge in order to learn and master the skills needed for his role as grand marshal. In the process, Jordan became the proud owner of a $17,000, five-speed Harley Davidson Night Rod and loads of other Harley paraphernalia.

BRAVES PLAYERS GOT A TASTE of raucous National Hockey League playoff atmosphere when several players and wives attended Game 2 of the Eastern Conference Finals, May 11, between the Pittsburgh Penguins and Philadelphia Flyers at Mellon Arena in Pittsburgh. Among the attendees were **Tom Glavine**, a long-time hockey fan, **Jeff Francoeur**, and **Chipper Jones**. It was Chipper's first professional hockey game. **Blaine Boyer** and his wife, **Ginsey**, and **Kelly Johnson** and his wife, **Lauren**, also attended, as did former Braves **Mark Lemke**, now broadcasting, and **Adam LaRoche**, now with the Pirates. **John Smoltz** was a guest in **Mario Lemieux**'s suite. Lemieux is a member of the NHL Hall of Fame who played 19 years with the Penguins. He is now the team's principal owner and chairman of the board...

Braves senior baseball advisor **Bobby Dews** had a small role in "The Lena Baker Story," an independent feature film telling the dark, true story of **Lena Baker**, the only woman ever executed in the electric chair by the state of Georgia. The film was shot last year in Colquitt, Georgia, near Dews' southwest Georgia home, and was based on a book of the same title written by **Lela Bond Phillips**, a professor at Andrew College where Dews is a writer-in-residence. The film was screened at a number of film festivals, including the Atlanta Film Festival on April 10, and received excellent reviews. Dews' character 'Mr. Candace's Friend #1' had one line: "Might be coroner business, John," which Dews solemnly recited...

Jim Allen, Braves senior director of corporate partnerships, ran and more importantly finished, the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon on April 21. "It was an awesome experience," said Allen. "From a runner's standpoint, the Boston Marathon is the granddaddy of races." Allen, 40, finished in 3 hours, 44 minutes, and used the race as training for an even bigger goal - competing in the Ironman Florida, Nov. 1, in Panama City Beach, Fla. The Ironman includes 2.4-mile swim in the ocean, biking for 112 miles, followed by a full marathon run. "The stud athletes will finish in 9 hours," he said. "My goal is to finish in 13 hours." Allen's family, wife **Molly**, and daughters **Savannah** and **Emily Ann**, are enthusiastic members of "Team Allen" and plan to be on hand in Florida for the competition. As part of a warmup for the November Ironman event, Allen, **Derek Schiller**, Braves executive vice president of sales and marketing, and a group of other friends participated in the Florida Half-Ironman held May 3 in Panama City Beach. "It was really tough, rough waters for our ocean swim, headwind on the way back on the bike, and scorching heat for the run," said Allen. "Did I forget to mention how tough it was?"...

Mark Kotsay's wife, **Jamie**, and their children, daughters **Grace** and **Sienna**, and infant son, **Trey**, met up with the team in Washington, D.C. Jamie and the girls visited the White House on Sunday evening, toured the Capitol on Monday and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum on Tuesday. Kotsay was disappointed to learn that the National

Museum of American History was closed for renovations until November. "That's the best one!" said the history buff...

A number of players including **Tim Hudson**, **Matt Diaz** and **Jeff Francoeur** spent the rainy off day (April 28) in Washington at the movies. The group saw the comedies "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" and "Baby Mama"...

Mark Teixeira used his off day in D.C. to visit family and friends in his hometown of Severna Park, Md. Teixeira's father, **John**, and mother, **Margy**, were in Pittsburgh for the May 9-12 series. Margy is from the Pittsburgh area and still has many family members in the area, all eager to see Teixeira play in person...

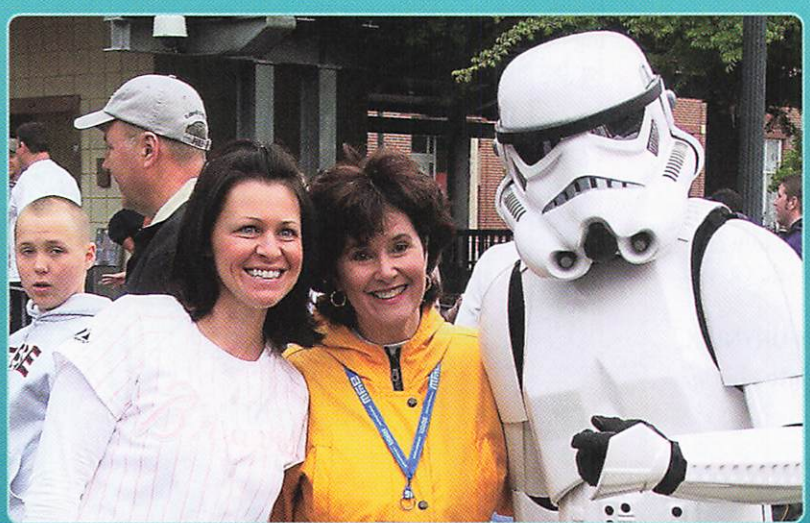
Andruw and **Nicole Jones** hosted a barbeque at their home in Duluth during the Dodgers' visit to Atlanta, April 17-19. **Jeff** and **Catie Francoeur** and **Brian** and **Ashley McCann** were among their former teammates in attendance. Nicole, son **Druw** and Andruw's father **Henry**, watched the Braves-Dodgers series from John Smoltz's suite at Turner Field...

Elaine Van Wieren is feeling a little like a pincushion these days. **Pete**'s wife is getting her shots up to date before leaving with her group of traveling buddies for a two-week photo safari to Africa later in the summer...

Skip Caray's wife, **Paula**, a gifted artist, spent three weeks, May 9-28, touring, painting and studying art in Italy...

Joe Simpson had an emergency appendectomy on May 5. He returned to the broadcast booth three days later, but took the May 9-10 weekend off in order to attend his son, **Gabe**'s, graduation from Auburn University that took place May 10. Simpson rejoined the team in Pittsburgh in time for the Sunday rainout and subsequent doubleheader on May 12...

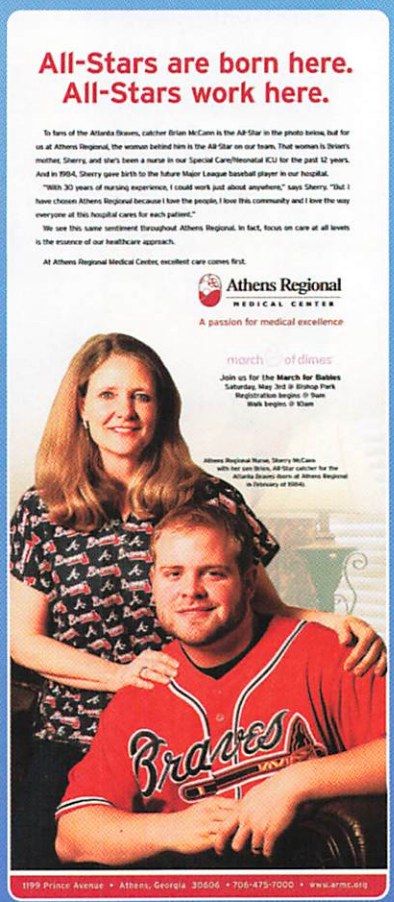
Eddie Perez proved you don't have to spend a lot of money to enjoy a great birthday. Though the actual date of his 40th birthday was May 4, he and his family used the Braves off day May 5 as an all-day fiesta, playing in the pool, playing baseball, and grilling out. Perez called it his "best birthday ever."



Kim Hudson (L) with Patricia Steinwedell, volunteer with Make-A-Wish of Georgia & Alabama, and a Storm Trooper from the Imperial Empire.

WHERE'S R2-D2?

KIM HUDSON and a group of friends including **Allyson Ohman**, wife of **Will Ohman**, took part in the Walk For Wishes, a fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Alabama and Georgia. The 3.5-mile walk took place at Atlantic Station in midtown Atlanta on April 19. Allyson pushed a double stroller bearing her twins, son and daughter, **Jack** and **Annabel**, the entire way. Kim's walking team raised $15,000 for Make-A-Wish.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All-Stars work here.
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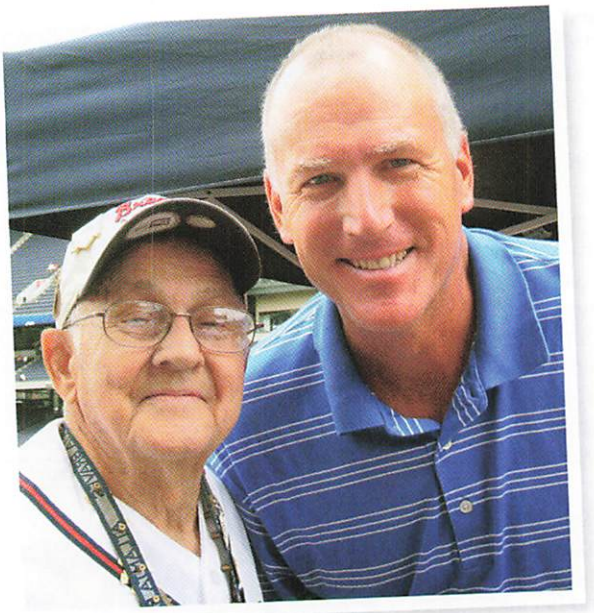
CATCHY AD

BRIAN MCCANN and his mother, **Sherry**, a special care/neonatal intensive care unit nurse at Athens Medical Center, were featured in a print advertisement for the hospital. It was unveiled Mother's Day weekend in order to coincide with the Mother's March, the longest-running fundraising event for the March of Dimes. The ad features the tag line "All-Stars are born here. All-Stars work here," referring to McCann and his mother. McCann, a two-time NL All-Star, was born at the hospital in 1984, and Sherry has worked there for the past 12 years. The ads ran in area newspapers and publications.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



PHILLY FANATICS

I have been a Braves fan my entire life. In the past couple of years, I converted my girlfriend into a loyal supporter, as well. Living right outside of Philly, we get our share of harassment every time we go to a game. No matter what, we always come to games decked out in our Braves gear. Jeff Francoeur is my girlfriend's favorite player, and recently, we actually got a picture with him. It is because of guys like Francoeur that we will gladly take the harassment every time we go to the ballpark. Go get 'em boys!

TOM URYNIAK
Downingtown, Pa.

REVEREND "POP POP"

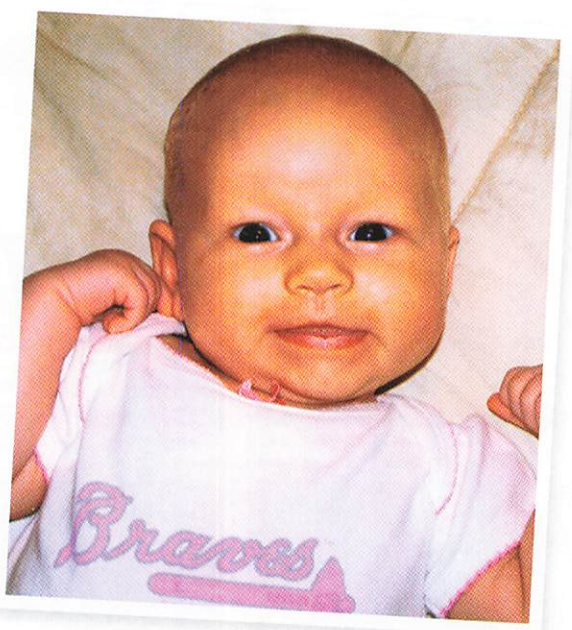
My father-in-law, the Reverend Robert L. Linthicum, celebrated his 90th birthday in October. He has been a great fan for 80 years. He regularly attends 25-30 games a year, a week of spring training every year, and rarely misses a broadcast when he doesn't attend. He delights in actively assisting the umpires and frequently has advice for Bobby Cox and the coaches. He's well known around Turner Field as "Pop Pop 90". Earlier he was known as "Pop Pop 85" and "Pop Pop 87." He delights in meeting people at the ballpark (seen here with former Brave Charlie Leibrandt) and regaling them with stories of earlier games and teams and favorite players.

H.C. SCHENKENBERGER
Lilburn, Ga.

TURNER FIELD OR BUST

We look forward to receiving ChopTalk every month and getting a more in-depth look at all the Braves players. We also enjoy watching the Braves together as a family. This is our six-week-old daughter, Callie, showing her support for the Braves. Hopefully, she will get to see her first live game next season.

CHRISTY CRAWFORD
Surrency, Ga.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

FIVE GENERATIONS!

Here are five generations of real Braves fans. Our lives are lived by their schedule! I am the daughter of Annis. Larry is my son. Bryan, Andrew and Lane are my great-grandsons, and Chris and Kevin are my grandsons. In the picture, we are (L-R): Gerry Mitchell (age 81), Annis Harrell (100), Larry Mitchell (61), Bryan Mitchell (14), Chris Mitchell (40), Andrew Mitchell (14), Lane Mitchell (13), Kevin Mitchell (37).

GERRY MITCHELL
Fayetteville, Ga.

YUNEL'S STORY

I've been a die-hard Braves fan all of my life. It really hurt the past couple of years not to see the Braves in the post-season. But it was refreshing to hear the heroic story of Yunel Escobar in ChopTalk (Sept. '07, Jan. '08). Even though there are so many stories like Yunel's that many of us Americans do not know about, Yunel's story has really stuck to me. I guess it's because I feel like he will be in a Braves uniform for as many years as Chipper and Smoltz have been, and I can't wait to see what he is going to do with his career. I feel he might be the piece that was missing to get us back into the playoffs.

CHRIS WILSON
Atlanta

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Atlanta Braves
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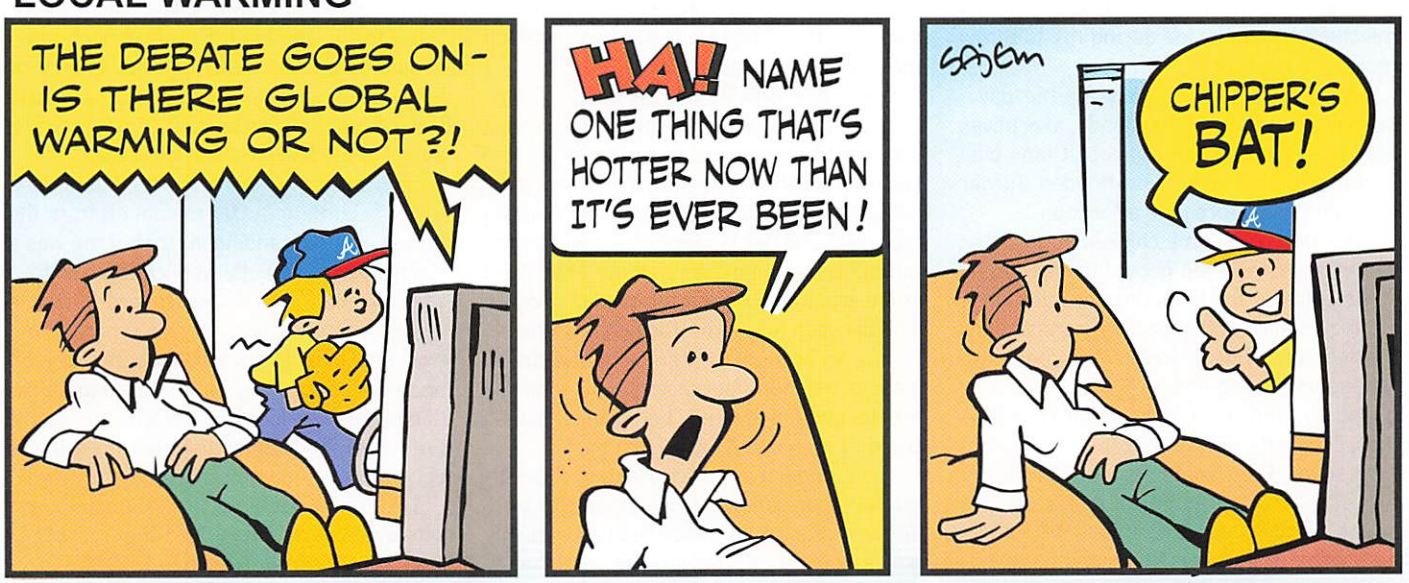
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

LOCAL WARMING



PERFECT EXCUSE FOR THE FOUR-HOUR FLU

BY DENNIS*

*** We agreed to protect Dennis' full identity, as well as that of fans mentioned below, so they could keep their day jobs.**

THERE AREN'T MANY baseball games where the outright theme is to take an "extended lunch" or, better yet, to call in sick and take a day off. Did anyone mention skipping school?

But the beaming sun, complimented by a slight breeze, created the perfect opportunity for me and much of Atlanta's workforce to enjoy a "nine-inning lunch" for the season's inaugural SunTrust BusinessFan Special at 1 o'clock on May 8.

Something had to give. The temptation to sip a cool drink while watching Chipper Jones maintain a batting average in the mind-boggling .400s on a Thursday afternoon was overwhelming. When coupled with the pre-game fun the Braves scheduled in the Plaza, it caused that darn "four-hour stomach flu" to kick in right on time.

I checked out the Braves' web site earlier that morning to further confirm this was the day to risk losing my 9 to 5. That really helped, because it posted the Braves' Field Day roster of activities that guaranteed a flashback to the family picnics that technology made a distant memory.

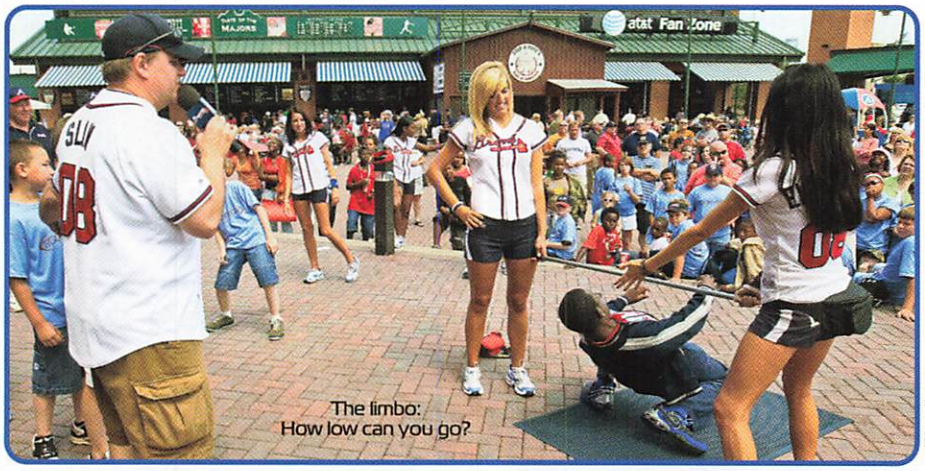
The lineup included an egg and spoon race, water balloon toss, limbo contest, and the always hilarious, "better them than me" pie-eating contest. The only thing missing was Aunt Mable's sweet potato pie and mischievous Uncle Joe daring me to throw rocks at a beehive.

So, I joined a new family for the day - school children by the busloads, executives with loosened ties, and baseball fans clad in summertime gear who flooded Turner Field on this picturesque afternoon.

After grabbing some chicken fingers that were surprisingly too good, I decided to be a spectator for the Field Day activities since I had on slacks and shoes - just in case my blasted conscious kicked in and made me renege on playing hooky.

The egg and spoon race set off the festivities. Dressed in Braves paraphernalia from head to toe, Fred from Orlando, Florida, got his egg across the finish line safe and sound. Beating out the other contestants with what he said was a winning combination of "speed and balance," he walked away with a Braves Prize Pack filled with goodies, including four tickets to The World of Coke. Nice!

Next up, eight duos faced each other and formed parallel lines for the water balloon toss. The rules were standard: After each underhand throw, the teams that completed a fumble-free exchange moved back one step. Splashes from dropped balloons began to multiply until Round 7, when Hansel and Josh - both in their early 20s - made the winning exchange from more than 40 feet.



The limbo: How low can you go?

PAUL ABELL

Suddenly revisiting the haunting memory of my dad's look of shame when I dropped that darn water balloon 15 years ago, I made the victors disclose their secret to success. "You gotta have soft hands," they said, as they simultaneously re-enacted their cradle catches. Eureka!

Once the official Plaza host, "Slam" Duncan, announced that the limbo contest was set to commence, a swarm of excited kids immediately formed a line to test their balance and flexibility. With music blasting and over 200 bystanders cheering on the rambunctious youngsters doing their best impressions of a comma, the contest ended in a tie between two third-grade contortionists.

Jim, an accountant from Alpharetta who also got the four-hour stomach flu, elbowed me, laughed, and said, "I envy those kids. I couldn't even crawl under that bar!"

The grand finale - the pie-eating contest - involved four competitors who sat at a table in the center of the Plaza with their heads poking out of plastic smocks and hands clasped behind their back. I would've sworn they were going to get aluminum tins filled with squirts of whipped cream. But, nope! The Braves didn't cut corners, using delectable key lime pies made with graham cracker crust and fluffy mounds of meringue topping.

Joining in with the, "Eat! Eat! Eat!" chants that filled the air, I strangely enjoyed the quartet burying their faces in ravaged pies. The two female contestants bailed out first after realizing they overestimated their gluttony, but a towering teenager and a middle-aged gentleman chomped away until the crowd's countdown hit zero.

I would've lost money betting against the pony-tailed Eddie, who beat the future Hawks center by a couple of bites. Relishing his 15 minutes of fame, Eddie said jokingly, "I like to eat. The key lime was good, but you should see what I can do with cherry or apple!" Fittingly, he won a $50 gift certificate for the upscale restaurant, Capital Grille, along with a $50 Best Buy gift card.

After seeing all the activities, I got in line to buy a bottle of water to cool off from the beaming sun. Standing in front of me was a mom holding a baby and chatting with a friend of hers. What I overheard blew me away. "I am always working hard, so I thought I'd treat myself, take the day off and come out today,'" she said in justification of her four-four flu. "My kids are happy, I'm happy, and really, this just feels like a huge family reunion!"

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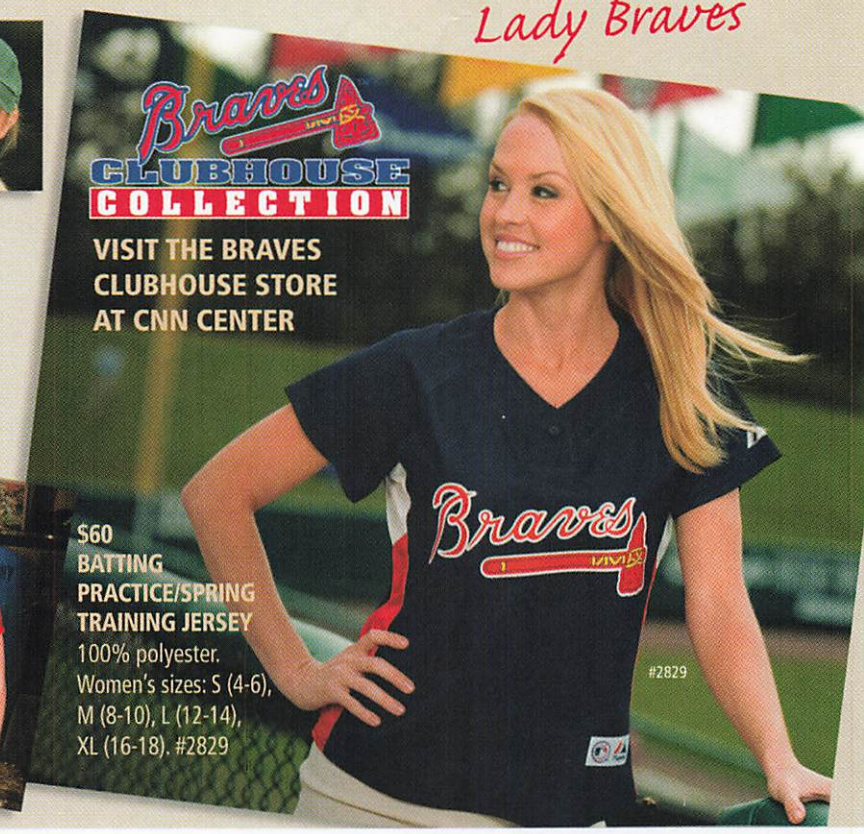

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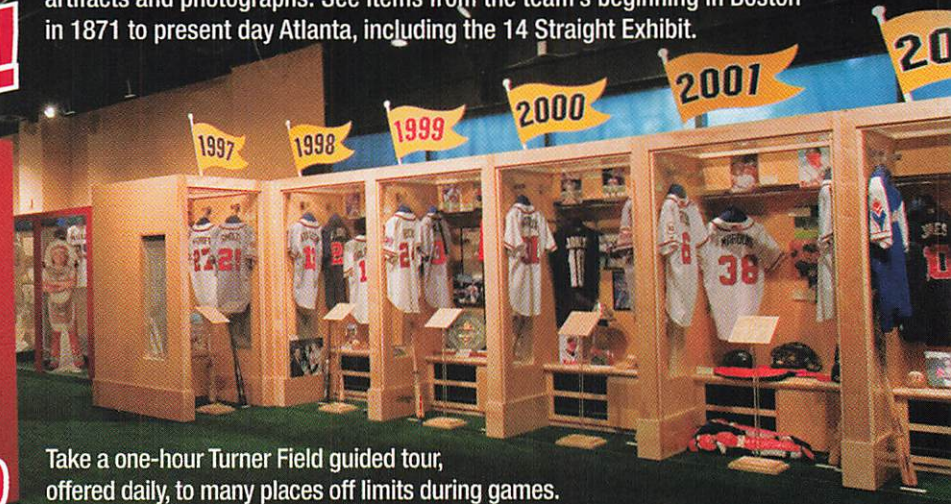

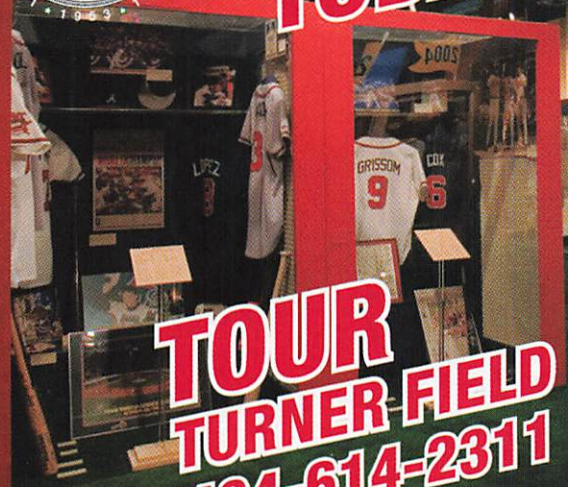

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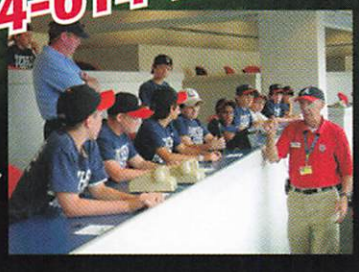

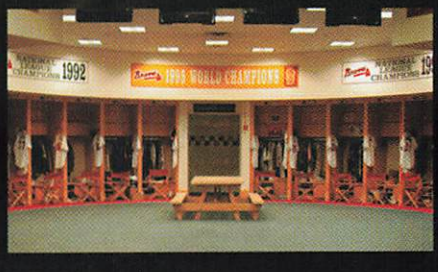

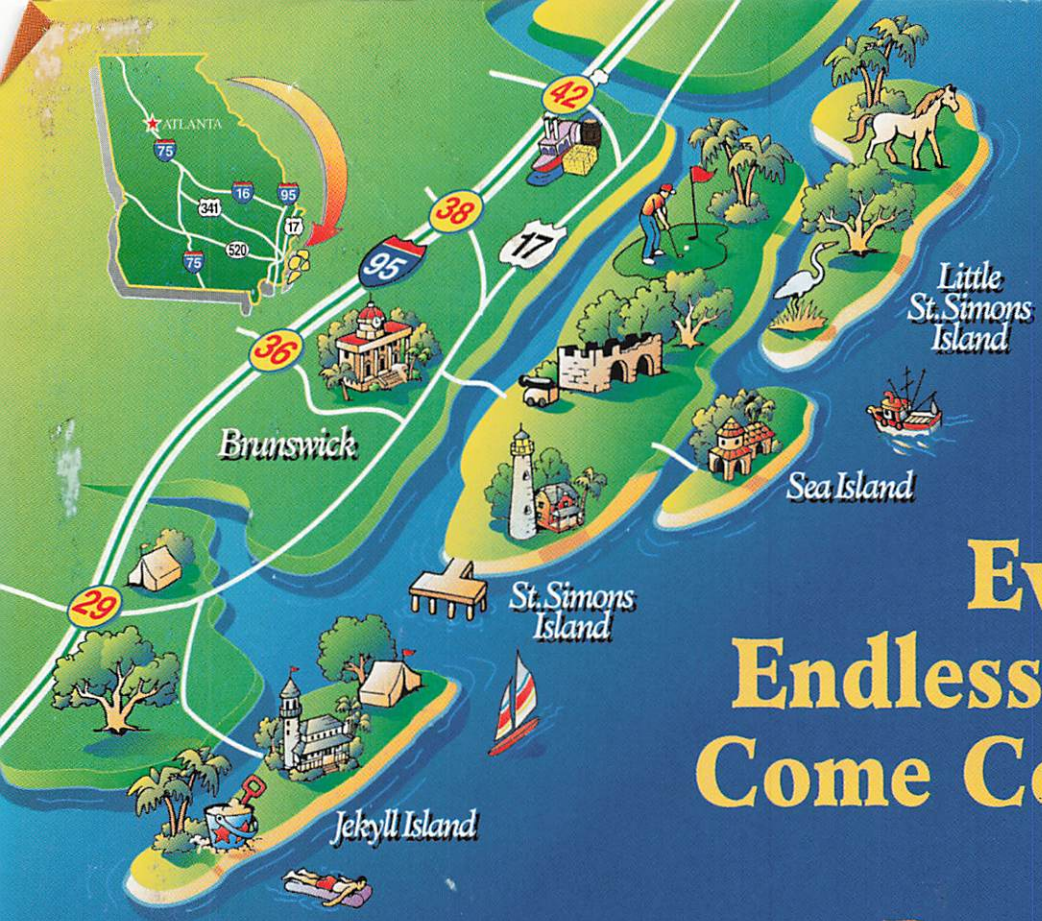

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